

JANUARY, 1920

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The R. F. B. *Review*.

# SMART SET

*A Magazine of Cleverness*



*Archie Gunn*

# SMART SET

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AND

HALF A HUNDRED BURLESQUES, EPIGRAMS, POEMS, SHORT SATIRES, ETC.

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Vol. LXI

JANUARY, 1920

No. 1

# The SMART SET

Edited by  
GEORGE JEAN NATHAN  
and  
H. L. MENCKEN



## You

*By David Morton*

A ROUND you wakes the ferment of old war,  
And pride of towered cities that are dust;  
You are the calm, white peace they battled for,  
And you are crimson empires sunk in lust.  
Across your eyes the bannered armies go,  
And on your brow the sleep of armies slain;  
You are the word the sages sought to know,  
The saint's white dream, the lover's loss—and gain.

Here where you sit beside me in the dark,  
I drink the waters of those ancient springs  
Meeting in you, and come at last to mark  
How Life may be at once a thousand things:  
Battle and peace, and music false or true,  
Dream and disaster. . . And the whole is You.



# Le Roi S'Amuse

*By Ian MacKinnon*

**N**OW it came to pass that in a certain country a peasant was greatly wronged by his king. Being a wight of some spirit, he betook himself to the court of the monarch, and, kneeling before the throne, called loudly for justice.

"Peace, yokel!" bawled his majesty, after the peasant had made his plea, "It amuses me to be unjust!"

And the peasant was delivered to the torturers, who scourged him roundly and kicked him down the back-stairs of the palace.

Now it chanced that king and peasant died about the same hour of the same day. Consequently, they came before the throne of God for judgment together. After the recording angel had made his report, God turned to the peasant.

"You, my worthy fellow," He said, "shall be immediately introduced into the company of the blest."

"How very delightful!" murmured the peasant.

"But as for *you*," turning fiercely to the king, "you shall go to the fiery pit. Eh, my good man?"—winking at the peasant.

Now it so happened that the peasant was a gentle and good-hearted kind of a peasant, and despite the treatment which had been accorded him by his king, this harsh sentence moved him with compassion.

"His agonies will be of no avail to me, Your Reverence," he exclaimed.

"But justice demands that he be punished," replied God. "You have been outraged by this rascal, and the wrong done you must be avenged."

"I know well, Your Reverence," said the peasant, "that strict justice demands his chastisement, but, if Your Reverence pleases, why not temper justice with mercy? Why not, in fact, let him off altogether, and forget the justice part for mercy?"

"Silence!" yelled God. "It amuses Me to be just."



**K**ISS, not when the girl expects it, but when she merely has hopes. *That is art!*



**T**HE laughs of to-day are the wrinkles of to-morrow.



# Tall Troy's Down!

(A Complete Novelette)

By Richmond Brooks Barrett

## CHAPTER I

THEODORE SCOTT, as he strolled with his big dog about his grounds, commented proudly, half to himself and half to the beast at his heels:

"Beautiful place! It couldn't be improved on."

He halted, the fingers of one hand imprisoned in his waistcoat pocket; with the other hand he rolled the cigar in his mouth around and around, ruminatingly.

"Beautiful place!" he repeated aloud.

Scott sighed out his content. He had found, years before, that the spot where he now stood afforded the best possible vantage-ground from which to survey his estate. His back was against the mossy stone wall forming the boundary to this portion of the place. A few feet away, a queer, crooked stairway climbed the wall and ambled down the other side into the adjoining grounds.

An uninterrupted stretch of green grass swept upward, with many undulations, right from Scott's feet to his grey-stone house; it seemed to lap about the distant foundation like an incredibly vivid lake.

The mansion itself was irregular and mellow, only one story high in the billiard-room wing, four stories in the middle. It was covered with ivy that every breeze played upon in silent music. The house appeared to be fast-rooted, a product of the soil on which it stood; it might have been drawing in nourishment from the ground while

at the same time it visibly sagged to decay in certain, deliberately neglected spots. The edifice showed a blurred bloom of surface, a bloom that Scott's careful tending allowed nowhere to be rubbed off. There was about it all the inevitable droop of age.

The house occupied the center of the circular lawn. A broad path marked the extremity of the smooth-clipped sward. On the other side of this walk, the greatest of Scott's treasures reared themselves—his trees. They formed a gigantic, primeval belt of green, flecked with the mahogany of copper beeches. They looked world-old, yet they still were in their sturdy prime. Below the impenetrable cloud of leaves sprawled the trunks and the grotesque roots, heaving themselves out of the earth in dragon-like convolutions. A sacred grove, it might have been, with prehistoric monsters on guard everywhere.

Scott stood at the foot of one of the most splendid trees. He put out a hand and stroked the wrinkled bark; it was tough and apparently loose as the hide of an elephant. The man peered into the massed verdure and nodded his head with pride to see the great rusty chain far up that pinioned and safeguarded the limbs. The dog, sniffing about, growled defiance and suspicion at the somnolent giant.

The hum of a motor interrupted Scott's silent rhapsodies. He scowled.

"Who in the world—?" he wondered and hurried away to intercept the intruders.

He headed them off in the driveway.

They proved to be two women in an open motor.

"My dear Theodore!" exclaimed one of the women. "It's delightful to see you again. I just heard this moment that you'd opened your house, so I rushed over. No, I won't get out!"

This was not in answer to any pressing invitation of Scott's; indeed, he had as yet had no opportunity to put in a word.

"We are simply desperate, Geraldine and I; the servants are leaving us in droves. Our house is so filthy, you know, they refuse to tackle it. I have taken a solemn vow today *never* to rent a place of mine again. All tenants are alike, Theodore; I haven't a doubt that even *you*, if you were a tenant, would lose your self-respect and throw lemon-peels and cigar butts into the Chinese vases. Please don't look at us; we are simply unclean—perfect pigs, Theodore. You must come to see us tomorrow; you will probably find me on my marrow-bones scrubbing the butler's pantry. There now, you're looking at me; don't deny it, you *are*. I begged you not to. Have I a daub of soot on the end of my nose?"

Scott, during this recital, had leaned against the door of the motor and, ever and again, had murmured urbanities. "Have you only just arrived?" "I'm so sorry the Posts left your house in such a dreadful state." "Are you going to be with us all summer?" "You look extremely fit," etc., etc.—a smooth stream of polite commentaries.

The woman had paid not the slightest attention to his remarks. Catching the peculiar, hollow intonation of her voice, its utter lack of reverberation, Scott suddenly remembered that she was deaf. She never heard a word anyone uttered; it was therefore her policy to substitute monologue for conversation. The result was really triumphant. In her presence people soon learned to keep still and to enjoy in silence the never-ending flow.

Mrs. Gibson, like all entertainers of the extemporaneous sort, knew that the boisterous vein, not without a dash of

downright buffoonery, would best hold an audience. Discarding all attempt at truthfulness, she made up stories (usually farcical and about herself for the most part) as she went along.

Endowed with an irrepressible fund of humour and an untiring vigour, she never wearied her auditors. This was in itself a remarkable achievement, for her voice was a monotone and she strung her words along as if to the beat of a metronome. In a woman of less exuberant invention, such an utterance would have soon become unbearable.

"Yes, this is Geraldine," said Mrs. Gibson, noticing that Scott's glance had strayed to the girl at her side. "She's pretty now, isn't she? Nobody knows the tortures the mother of a growing daughter suffers. Of course, as a baby she was hideous—I had no hope whatever then. She was as cross-eyed as two sticks, with no nose whatever, so far as I could see. All of a sudden, when she was six, she developed into the most beautiful creature imaginable—you remember? Her curls were sheer gold and I have never seen such dimples in a pair of human legs either before or since. I was in the seventh heaven. But I shall *never* forget the day when I first noticed she was getting skinny, with great bones flapping about, instead of arms and legs. 'My God,' I told her, 'you're not a child, you're a hobgoblin.' She got worse and worse until she was fifteen. That was my principal reason for running off to Europe as I did and hiding my head for four years. I couldn't face my friends' pity. And here she is, Theodore, a perfect picture, as she was at six—though she hasn't any dimples in her knees now, to be sure. I don't feel really safe yet; I'm hoping to see her married before she turns into a fright again."

Whereupon Mrs. Gibson, with a quiet smile, patted the girl's arm indulgently.

"We are very fond of each other, Theodore," she continued, "but we quarrel in the most fearful and noisy way. Perhaps you recall the frays we

used to have; we are worse if anything nowadays."

She shook her head and assumed a melancholy air. Mrs. Gibson never laughed; her smile was always slow and rather sad, vanishing from her face by imperceptible degrees, much in the manner of the Cheshire Cat's grin. Her anecdotes gained effect from the expression of tragic, almost lugubrious disillusion she habitually wore.

"By the way," she remarked, "I want to talk to you about that ridiculous stone wall between our lawns, Theodore. It gives my whole place a down-at-the-heel look. Won't you allow me to put up something really expensive and distinguished?"

"My dear Vivian," shouted Scott, "I love that stone wall. Nothing shall induce me to part with it."

Mrs. Gibson was a clever judge of expression, even though she was unable to read lips. She got Scott's protest in a moment.

"Don't scowl at me, please, as if you wanted to chew the roses off my hat," she exclaimed. "I see you feel just the same about the dowdy wall as you used to. You would refuse to speak to me on the street if I changed it, wouldn't you? Did you *ever* behold such a savage, Geraldine?"

Geraldine, who had been leaning back in the motor and examining Scott with cool discernment while Mrs. Gibson held the center of the stage, suddenly sat up straight and shut her parasol with a decisive click.

"We want to see your gardens," she told Scott. "Mother has probably forgotten why she came; she'll stay here and gossip for hours unless we stir her up."

She got to her feet and sprang out of the automobile.

"Ah, I am wasting time!" cried Mrs. Gibson. "I'm going to send the motor away, Theodore. I must go over your greenhouses with you and ask your advice. Geraldine and I can get home by way of that absurd stile or whatever it is. Kling!"—and she addressed the footman on the box—"You're to get all

those pots and pans I told you about—at the five-and-ten-cent shop if possible. You'll need money, I suppose."

She fumbled about in a mesh bag.

"I have nothing less than a hundred-dollar bill; give it to them"—and she thrust it at him—"and tell them I'll work it out."

Scott started forward in dismay; but Geraldine put a hand on his arm and stopped him.

"Please don't bother," she said calmly. "Kling understands. That is just Mother's way. He has change enough, I'm sure."

Mrs. Gibson, after many more exhortations to the footman on the subject of kitchen-ware, turned to Scott.

"I know you're planning to show us some of your ancient and venerable trees," she remarked, "but we are in a hurry. Please take us straight to the nectarine house and the vegetable garden. Geraldine and I are practical souls. We don't care about Nature, when it's not edible. We've come to ask you whether or not we should discharge Hawkins—our head-gardener; he's let everything run to seed, I'm afraid. You know Hawkins? He has a glass eye and a game leg, but charming manners."

Mrs. Gibson made a point of giving the people she talked about dreadful disfigurements. These afflictions often proved fictional; but they served the lady's purpose—they added colour and zest to her anecdotes.

"You are so neat and unruffled, Theodore," opined Mrs. Gibson, as they started off for the gardens. "Geraldine and I should both be in the bathtub at this moment, scrubbing our dirty faces."

Scott only smiled, for the two women were magnificently gowned. The mother's frock was of cream-coloured chiffon, with great blue hydrangeas strewn about it; strange silken roses drooped over the brim of her hat. A rope of wonderful pearls added the last extravagant touch to the costume.

Mrs. Gibson's figure was amazing: above the waist she was opulent, with

a bosom of Junoesque proportions; but her hips were corseted beyond belief, giving her from the waist down an effect of excessive and suffering slenderness. Walking was a gingerly and a hazardous undertaking with her; she leaned her weight on Scott's arm and took steps like those of a mechanical doll; the joints were so pinioned by the cruel harness she wore that they failed to function.

Mrs. Gibson's dress was short; her ankles and feet were as slim and pretty as a girl's. Her head was superb in shape and crowned with beautiful black hair. The face was arrogant, hard and handsome. Decidedly, Scott reflected, she was admirable, imposing. He sought to visualize her with an ear-trumpet affixed to her Olympian bosom and failed. He even tried to picture her on her knees in the butler's pantry—again he failed; it was obvious a woman so imprisoned would be unable to swerve an inch from her erect poise.

Geraldine was very different from her mother and yet startlingly like her. She was dressed in white, with a pink sunshade; pink morning-glories formed a delicate cluster around the brim of her big hat. Tall, lithe and free from the pressure of corsets, she looked like a fleet huntress, but with a statuesque quality about her. She, too, was a goddess, of the true Olympian carriage. It was hard to believe that a creature of such calm self-possession was only nineteen.

Geraldine was unequivocally beautiful. Her head was small and of perfect proportions; its shape was impeccable, its set on her long neck suavely easy and aristocratic. The girl's colouring was pure ivory and gold—a skin of cool pallor with an aureole of pale yellow hair. Her features resembled her mother's; they were smaller but possessed the same insolent hauteur. Geraldine, for all her free grace and simple costume, looked quite as specialized and expensive as Mrs. Gibson.

"Are you bathing yet?" Geraldine asked Scott in a low, clear voice while they strolled about the nectarine house.

"It's not too early in the season, is it? Come with me tomorrow, won't you, please?"

"I shall be delighted," returned Scott.

"Thank you so much." Geraldine smiled at him. "Mother will be furious. She will want me as a referee between her and the servants. I'll tell her I have errands on Thames Street; then she'll have to let me go. With Mother, there are always pots and pans to be bought, you know."

"Geraldine, stop talking to Theodore," commanded Mrs. Gibson. "You two have been whispering together for a long time and paying no attention to me. That is Geraldine's way, Theodore. She gets tired of hearing me talk, so she tries to distract my friends' attention from me. It is rude of her; it is rude of *you*, too, Theodore. I haven't a doubt you're hatching a dreadful plot between you."

Geraldine laughed merrily.

"Mother and I know each other so well," she remarked.

"I am dog-tired," complained Mrs. Gibson. "Geraldine, dear, we must be going. I haven't talked about Hawkins, have I? That was my only excuse for coming, too. Geraldine, why didn't you *make* me talk about Hawkins? Do let's get out into the air; it is stifling here."

Mrs. Gibson led the way for a few paces; then she paused and grasped Scott's arm once more.

"No, we can't stop for tea," she said. "Lead me to that stile, Theodore, and boost me over it. I haven't the strength or the courage to climb the rickety steps."

Despite her protestations of fatigue, Mrs. Gibson talked her way energetically clear across Scott's grounds.

On top of the stone wall at last, she smiled down sadly.

"It has been delightful," she said. "Run over and see us tomorrow. I shall send Geraldine away and we can talk about old times, the dear, indecent old times, Theodore."

Still talking, she disappeared by slow degrees into her own grounds, the smile

gradually vanishing as she went. Geraldine, at her mother's side, waved a hand in Scott's direction and called out: "Tomorrow at noon. Don't forget."

Scott, left alone, shrugged and shook a disapproving head.

"But they *are* rather glorious," he qualified it.

## CHAPTER II

"GERALDINE is undiluted Prescott," Scott decided that night, after he had let his thoughts dwell on the girl for a good half hour.

An undiluted Prescott was always an arresting and alarming figure, warranted to provide excitement.

The exploits of the family had begun in Virginia during the seventeenth century. Townsend Prescott had set the pace in Jamestown and his descendants had never allowed the breakneck speed to slacken. Throughout the Colonial period of American history, the Prescotts had been staunch supporters of England and bitter enemies of all who considered themselves downtrodden by the Hanoverians. The Revolution had been unable to shake their allegiance; after Yorktown they had sailed in a body for the beloved fatherland.

Fifty years later, the sole survivor of the family had settled in New York; he had amassed an immense fortune and joined another to it by marriage. The only child of this union, a son, had been a scandalous and lovable scapegoat, quite in the fashion of his ancestors. The people whom the Prescotts married never seemed to communicate any curbing influence to their offspring; a Prescott could be counted on to be a Prescott and nothing else. Mrs. Gibson and her brother had been true to type; and now Geraldine Gibson, the last of the line, had in her veins the disturbing blood of her race.

A Prescott was inevitably vigorous, haughty and eccentric. Many of them had been polished wits; a number of them had been undisputed leaders of fashion; but somehow there had never

been a Prescott who could be called civilized.

Legend clustered about the name; there were enough Prescott anecdotes extant even in the eighteenth century to fill a fat volume.

For example, Frederick Prescott of pre-Revolutionary days had run off with a pretty matron when he was just turned twenty. A week later he killed her husband in a duel; the next morning her brother despatched him.

Then there was Geoffrey Prescott—the most celebrated toastmaster of his generation; he had eclipsed all rivals with tongue, sword and stomach for wine. Annabel Prescott, his sister, had taken a high fence once too often and had left behind her a Virginia clad in sackcloth and ashes and bewailing her trampled beauty.

Tony Prescott, Mrs. Gibson's father, had been notorious, too; most of the tales current about him were not for the drawing-room. The intimacy of the club was alone the proper setting for the telling of them; men dared to whisper some of the least hilarious into their wives' ears—and even these were so many signals for blushes. Tony had done one admirable thing; finding his fortune in a sad state, he had rushed across country to California in '49 and had delved out of the earth a treasure beyond the dreams of romance. The rest of his life he had spent losing and winning vast sums in rapid-fire succession. On his death, he had bequeathed to his son and daughter some forty millions. Tony, Jr., had proceeded to drink himself into the next world. It took him just three years to accomplish this. Then Mrs. Gibson had found herself the sole possessor of her father's gold.

Mrs. Gibson was not of the lethargic sort. She always spent her money and her days in prodigal fashion. New York and Newport had the maddest seasons in their history during the ten years of her married life. Thomas Gibson, a slender and retiring man, had loved his brilliant wife in a quiet way; by way of return, Vivian had adored Thomas to the point of insanity, had

literally killed him with her ardour and the round of gaiety by which she celebrated her union with him. The marriage feast had lasted for a decade and Gibson had at last succumbed. Vivian had been prostrated on his death; but her vigour returned in a rush at the end of a year. Rumour had it that she had not been unfailingly estimable during her widowhood. Certain men were cited as equivocal comforters; it was said that the lady often drank more than was good for her, more, indeed, than many a seasoned drunkard could stand.

These stories were by no means trustworthy. Still, how otherwise could one account for her abrupt departure from America, for her protracted sojourn abroad?

Thus the scandal-mongers confronted Mrs. Gibson's staunch admirers. It was true that she had left the States, her entire retinue in tow, when her daughter was fifteen, that she had taken a queer, isolated place somewhere in the Tyrol and had shut herself away with the child and her governess. People argued a cure of some sort or at least a period of insanity. The four years had not been all of seclusion, to be sure. There had been sporadic descents upon Paris, abrupt onslaughts on the Riviera, and a season or two at Spa. Society was still wondering just what the trouble might be, when she returned to New York of a sudden one June morning and, a week later, had arrived at Newport.

As a matter of fact, Mrs. Gibson's growing deafness had been the occasion for this virtual retirement from the world; her vanity and overweening pride had been injured by the affliction and she had rushed off, afraid lest the failing should become known, mortified at the prospect of people's pity. Among the Tyrolean peaks she had fought out her problem and determined on a campaign. She had appeared in Paris and the resorts at last and tried out the clever scheme of monologue on those of her friends who happened to be on the scene. Encouraged by the brilliant

success of the manœuvre and comforted by the superb beauty of her daughter, she had returned now in triumph to her native land.

When Mrs. Gibson took possession of her house, the Newport season had not begun; but people were already foreseeing the feverish round of July and August. Scott had called up in the silent hours a vision of the queenly Geraldine, had dubbed her "undiluted Prescott" and wondered just what sort of mischief she would be up to.

At that very moment, many others, immersed to the ears in preparations for the summer, were also indulging in uneasy conjecture.

In ten years' time, just how much fatter would that volume of Prescott anecdotes be?

### CHAPTER III

TRUE to appointment, Scott entered the pavilion of Bailey's Beach at twelve o'clock sharp; Geraldine Gibson was already there. She was once more in white, with sweet-peas of a salmon shade at her waist and around her hat-brim. She sat on the piazza rail and faced the sea, her arms stiff at her sides, the hands, palm-upward, supporting her.

"Good morning," she called out gaily. "We shall have the ocean to ourselves. Isn't that nice?"

Turning her back to the water, she swung her feet over the balustrade in a flash and gave him a long, white hand.

"I've been sitting here for fifteen minutes," she told him. "My head is full of plans—deep-sea exploits."

"Have I a place in them?" asked Scott. "I'm a very cautious man, Geraldine; if I'm to be your escort on these marine expeditions, I'm afraid my death will be a watery one."

"But you mustn't disappoint me," protested Geraldine. "Mother wouldn't hear of my doing these things alone. She trusts you; she would feel I was safe with you."

"Your mother's kind; as a matter of fact, I should be no protection at all.

I'm really a plain, workaday swimmer." Scott was modest.

"I'll tell you my plan," vouchsafed Geraldine. "I want to see if I can go from Bailey's to Easton's."

Scott did his best to discourage her.

"My dear girl, it's at least three miles."

"Yes, I know," said Geraldine. "That shouldn't frighten us, though; Uncle Tony once swam to Narragansett."

"You must remember," complained Scott, "that your Uncle Tony had been a football star in his day. You can't emulate him with any hope of success. Your Uncle Tony was a heavy-weight champion, too. Do you want to copy him in that also?"

Geraldine laughed.

"No, I don't intend to take up prize-fighting, I confess. Swimming, you see, is perfectly ladylike and doesn't spoil a girl's figure."

"True," admitted Scott. "We'll talk about this picnic later. You're not planning to do it today, I hope?"

"Oh, no!" Geraldine shook her head earnestly. "You haven't heard all my plan yet."

Scott groaned out an impolite remonstrance.

"Good heavens, what more could there be?"

"We shan't do it in the daytime," Geraldine elucidated. "We are going to choose a moonlight night, Theodore."

Scott pursed his lips into a silent whistle.

"How very romantic!" he said. "Leander, with Hero by his side! Your idea is too cozy to be Greek. Will you serve sandwiches and a bottle of beer en route?"

"You misunderstand," replied Geraldine. "I want a moonlight night, because that's the time when the water is the proper temperature. I'm not sentimental in the least."

"I stick to the romantic side of the picture," persisted Scott. "Can't you see the phosphorus playing over my bare legs? I'm sure you can."

"How conceited" Geraldine wrinkled

her forehead delicately. "Do you call your bare legs romantic?"

"With the aid of the moon, I'm positive they could be made so." Scott was unabashed.

"I think it's high time we went into the water." Geraldine got to her feet, cutting short the man's fanciful flight.

In his bathing-suit, Scott walked up and down for a good quarter of an hour before he was rewarded by a sight of her. As she walked down the flight of steps, he told himself that she was the sort for whom a man would waste half a lifetime of waiting. She might have been a Burne-Jones sorceress, with her still eyes on the watch for gallies. There was an architectural quality about her; the blue sky behind her sank into a mere background, a wash of colour against which she loomed, straight, slender, of unearthly stature. Her white arms, her neck, seemed incredibly long and fluent. Scott felt dwarfed of a sudden; it was as if an ivory-and-gold goddess of heroic proportions had left her twilight shrine and was advancing towards him down the steps of her temple.

She reached his side at last; to his amazement, Scott found himself smiling into the eyes of a young girl, no taller than he, and dressed in a conventional and very smart bathing-suit.

She thrust out a silken-clad leg for inspection.

"Aren't they much more romantic this way?" she asked.

He shrugged.

"They will serve, I admit," he responded.

Geraldine paused for a moment and tucked a last curl away under her cap.

Then, erect and vigorous, she strode off towards the ocean.

She stood the first shock of the water in Spartan fashion, with only a quick hunch of the shoulders.

"It is very cold," she confessed—"ice that has forgotten to freeze."

A half dozen long lopes and she was under, before the man had even so much as got his toes covered.

"My God!" he sputtered. "My breath has gone—never—to return."

But she was already forging ahead, cleaving the water with her beautiful arms. He followed meekly in her wake. Far out they swam, silent and exultant; then, at a signal from the girl, they turned and raced for shore.

On the beach again, she swept off her head-covering and shook out her hair. Scott drew in his breath quickly from sheer admiration; but Geraldine was matter-of-fact.

"I'm afraid I've got it wet," she said, her fingers playing in and out of the glorious mane.

She was dazzling at that moment, with the sun on her. Her hair was no longer a pale aureole; it was a yellow flame licking at the white face and arms. There were metallic glints in it, points of fire, liquid, running lights.

"You're a true fire divinity now," remarked Scott. "Loke turned woman!"

Geraldine made no reply; she continued to handle deftly the molten mass, to toss strands about, to run her hands through the tumbled mesh on the search for snarls. Then, in a flash, she had flung it all back over her shoulders and forgotten it.

"Your teeth are chattering in your head," she informed Scott, "Don't wait for me, please; I shall be a long time dressing. Till tomorrow at twelve then!"

She gave him a distant smile and left him.

#### CHAPTER IV

FOR generations the Scotts and the Prescotts had occupied adjoining places during the summer. The two families had always been on the best of terms; but, strangely enough, no Scott had ever married a Prescott. There had been from the first a gulf between, a gulf over which nobody had ever attempted to throw a bridge.

The two estates were typical. The Scott mansion and lawn and trees had remained unaltered for over a century

—as the Scott jewels had been left in their original quaint settings.

The Prescotts, on the other hand, were forever pulling things down, rooting things up, embellishing extravagantly, disfiguring shamelessly. The irresponsible, irreverent, restless crew were unable to keep their hands from rending one moment and rearing the next. Each of them had all the old jewels refurbished and, dissatisfied with the result, proceeded to buy other stones, unhallowed by tradition, remarkable only for size and magnificence.

It was the same with their houses. A Prescott, on the death of his parents, called every architect in vogue at the time to his side, quarreled with each in turn, threw money about and in general kept the surrounding temperature at fever-heat; the edifice of dreams, when completed, was inevitably a failure, from the owner's viewpoint. Additions, deletions would be in order at once. The Prescott grounds at Newport had been graced in turn by wooden Colonial houses, chateaus after the French manner, palaces in the best tradition of the Italian renaissance, marble villas that had no tradition whatever back of them. Peace was unknown to the spot; there were ever sounds of hammers, curses of foremen, the creak of derricks, the loud complaints of Prescotts.

Mrs. Gibson, being a true Prescott, had torn down her father's rococo house and supplanted it with a Gothic pile. She deemed the result ludicrous; every time her motor crossed the drawbridge over the moat, purred its way the length of the drive cut through the immense grey tower and came to rest in the interior court, she cursed herself for a vulgar, meddling fool.

People laughed at the Prescotts, of course. The Prescotts knew they did and took the ridicule in all calmness; did not they laugh at themselves? When all was said and done, however, it was granted on every side that the eccentric family was admirable. More—they were superhuman. They were the last

of the Titans; sanity and discretion were not to be expected of them. The Scotts' opinion was no exception to the rule. They, too, considered the Prescotts superb; but as for marriage with them—as well choose almighty Zeus or stentorian Hera for a fireside companion!

Theodore Scott saw a great deal of Mrs. Gibson and Geraldine before the season got under way. He continued to take daily swims in the girl's wake; he dined often with the two women; he entertained them at his own house. Ever and again, there would come over him a startled sense of his insignificance beside them; particularly at his own dinner table it would strike him. His mind would go harking back to mythological tales, even while he chatted on the most casual topics. In his imagination he would fancy the descent of the ladies from golden houses on Olympus; he pictured exotic chariots drawn by peacocks or leopards waiting under the porte-cochère. Mrs. Gibson, in the midst of a tirade against Hawkins' cucumbers, would, without warning, become remote and Homeric. At times, as he gazed at the exquisite Geraldine, he half-expected to see a quiver of silver arrows slung from her shoulder.

Scott would often laugh to himself at his absurdity; and yet the hierarchical visions persisted. He sought to thresh the thing out. Certainly it couldn't be that their clothes exalted them. The costumes they wore were excessively modern. The mother was always clamped and riveted into the very latest creation from Paquin or Callot Soeurs; her hair was cast according to the vogue of the moment. Geraldine's gowns were a far cry from the fluttering draperies with which one swathes divinities; her yellow locks, piled high, had evidently been prepared with as much care as the cakes in a confectioner's window.

Still, the two women preserved the majesty of goddesses. The explanation lay in their picturesque proportions and in the set of their heads,

Scott at last decided. Nothing could alter that superb, insolent bearing; witness the mother's corsets! A woman who, with such a handicap, could retain her elemental grandeur, was indeed colossal.

The appetites of the Gibsons perhaps contributed to their general sublimity, for they well-nigh ate Scott out of house and home. They were catholic in their tastes; nothing was too exotic or too homely for them. Fresh vegetables of the most everyday description would be despatched with relish and speed; outlandish delicacies tricked out with rich sauces fared no better. The two ladies just sat at Scott's side and ate everything in sight, that was all there was to it. Their Little Marys must be made of some empyreal and immortal substance, the man reflected.

"By the way, Theodore," remarked Geraldine one evening, at the moment when her mother's attention was distracted by the lobster before her, "tomorrow the moon is full. I have made all the necessary arrangements for our swim."

Scott looked scared.

"Splendid!" he vouchsafed, without great conviction. "What *are* the arrangements, Geraldine?"

"We start at eight-thirty. A boat will follow us—"

All at once Scott felt himself a prey to anxiety—not for himself but for Geraldine.

Letting his eyes rest on her, he had forgotten her Olympian character; he saw only that she was very slender, immensely precious. Her eyes, usually so deep and clear, were full of young adventure. For the first time she seemed an eager girl and nothing more. He hated to think of her out on the perilous waste, buffeted by the black, treacherous water.

Then in a flash his fear melted into thin air; Geraldine had straightened, as if in answer to a challenge, and had thrown her head back.

Scott, succumbing anew to her spell, voiced his admiration.

"Neptune wouldn't dare to be any-

thing but hospitable to *you*," he said earnestly.

Geraldine frowned.

"I wish you wouldn't be so silly, Theodore," she returned. "You'll spoil the fun if you take the thing seriously. I think it will be a lark."

Scott's attitude was constantly giving her cause for complaint. Throughout the past weeks Geraldine had sought to make of the man a companion in her jolly pranks; but, handicapped by physical majesty, she had been unable to keep him from dropping ever and again into a sort of silent genuflexion. He could see that she was bored, almost hurt, when he intoned her praises; but he found it impossible not to acclaim her to the accompaniment of a swinging censer, as it were.

He couldn't, for the life of him, consider their equality seriously; he was her choir, making a clumsy and abashed moan upon the midnight hours. Geraldine didn't like it; showed she resented all the fuss he made; but it did no good.

"Mother doesn't know anything about our swim, of course," said Geraldine, still with a look of impatience. "You mustn't tell her. Promise you won't!"

The night of the moonlight exploit, Scott, not without a feeling of desecration, adopted an offhand air with Geraldine. She showed her gratitude by bounding and loping gracefully at his side while they awaited the launching of the boat that was to trail them. Her laugh was bright, with a note of childlike glee in it.

"Aren't we fools?" she asked him. "At least, I'm a fool. You're not to blame at all, Theodore. I hope Mother will believe me when I tell her it wasn't your fault."

It was low tide. In the east the moon hung, a hard, bright circle like a flat coin against the midnight-blue heavens. The sand was wet and icy cold near the water's edge, its surface gleaming with pools of trickling light, serpentine rivulets of chilly flame. The

ocean was as black and polished as lacquer.

Out into the path of the moon the boat swung; Geraldine and Scott, immersed to the knees, shivered and laughed into each other's eyes. All about them flashed and danced the phosphorus, metallic yellow plates on the glossy water.

Geraldine, with a quick gasp of breath, plunged forward and disappeared under the fin of a wave covered with golden scales. When she reared up once more, hoary flakes fell from her arms. She struck out into the darkness, white frosty fire licking at her as she forged ahead. Scott made after her with a shout.

"We mustn't talk!" she called out; "but do look at the moon, Theodore."

"Glorious!" he returned.

"Do you think so?" Geraldine laughed. "It reminds me of a thin, lemon-flavored wafer; it makes me hungry."

They forced their way silently after that through the liquid night, the comfortingplash of oars nearby. On and on they swam, with slow, powerful strokes. Far away on their left was the shadowy mass of the cliffs, dotted here and there with the glitter of an illuminated house.

"I'm so homesick," admitted Geraldine once. "Did you know there *could* be such loneliness and immensity?"

Scott panted out an inarticulate reply.

"It makes me ache," pursued the girl. "I almost wish we'd brought a brass band along. I wonder if it's silent and terrible like this in tombs."

The serenity of the night was oppressive. The wan moon and the still, aloof planets seemed worlds distant.

"Two miles done!" called a deep voice from the boat. "More than half the distance covered."

It was meant to be encouraging; but Scott, grasping the words in a dazed way, groaned. His heart was knocking hard at his ribs, positively clanging in the manner of a bell-clapper. There was an unbearable pain under his heart;

his throat was stinging. He swallowed mouthful after mouthful of salt water and felt his legs grow leaden. His head swam; in a moment he would faint, he knew.

Geraldine, still sweeping ahead with a rhythmic beat, had caught the sound of the man's labored breathing and had been mutely studying out the situation.

Of a sudden, spurred on by a succession of quick, rattling gasps from him, she did a very human, a very charitable and ungodlike thing.

She made for the boat, grasped for the gunwale.

"Please—take me in," she faltered. "I—I can't go any farther."

In a second she was over the side.

"Theodore," she pleaded then and smiled down into the anguished face bobbing about half above and half under the water, "won't you join me? I never have felt so gloomy."

No sooner said than complied with! Scott, the next moment, was sprawling in the bottom of the boat.

"Forgive me," apologized Geraldine. "I couldn't stand it any longer. The whole world was beginning to feel like one huge icicle, with you and myself frozen into the middle of it."

Scott gazed at her in speechless gratitude; he was sure the men around him were smothering guffaws behind their hands, but he didn't care at all.

Geraldine stood, straight and tall, near the bow. She was wrapped in a long cloak. The effect was compelling. The fluttering draperies might have been great furled wings that reached from her shoulders to her feet. She was motionless, yet somehow, as they sped back along the lunar highway, she seemed both the guide and the motive power.

"Goddess excellently bright," commented Scott under his breath. Aloud, he remarked, "Are you fagged, Geraldine?"

She nodded and sighed.

"Bed is still so far away," she said, "and there's Mother to face tomorrow morning."

She dropped down beside him, held

up a flask and a handful of crackers.

"I'm hungry and unhappy," she confessed and began to eat.

Silently they partook of the meagre repast. Scott peered at her sleepy eyes, at her beautiful lips flecked with crumbs. After all, she was only a tired, helpless child. A wave of protecting tenderness swept him. He threw an arm about her, bent and kissed her mouth.

Startled, she rose and moved away from him. Scott trembled at the thought of his temerity. He had been guilty of sacrilege; he had held a vengeful deity to his breast!

Geraldine suddenly turned and faced him.

"Don't be so silly, Theodore," she scolded.

The man was too conscience-stricken to perceive that her voice was unsteady.

They said no more. When the boat was beached at last, Geraldine sprang out, murmured "Good night" and ran to the motor that waited for her.

Scott lingered for a while, without knowing why he did so, and moped. Soon he realized that he was shaking under his heavy coat.

Then, sad beyond belief, he hung his head and walked away from the brilliant scene.

## CHAPTER V

HE awoke the next morning in a jubilant frame of mind. He still ached in every muscle; but that did not bother him in the least. He lay in bed and smiled blandly. His thoughts were all of Geraldine. He felt her firm, cold lips under his; he could almost taste the salt on them, so vivid was the remembrance.

He was man of the world enough not to consider the embrace binding; it had been romantic but not in the nature of a betrothal kiss. He knew the Prescotts, he told himself; the women of that family were not the sort to be chary in any way. Geraldine had been beguiled of her record swim—and through no fault of her own; still, he

did not feel repentant. He was contemplating her now as he always contemplated the girls he had kissed; to-day she seemed by no means remote or unattainable.

Noon found him in Mrs. Gibson's grounds; he was making a leisurely way to the house when the sound of raised voices caused him to halt.

Trapped in the beech-walk, he was forced to stay where he was and, willy-nilly, to be a witness of a dramatic clash of arms between mother and daughter.

The two women faced each other at some distance from him: they stood confronted, heads thrown back, eyes levelled; they bristled with wrath. Mrs. Gibson was in a morning wrap of purple. The diamonds on her fingers and at her breast gave out white flames; her pretty feet were planted solidly, the heels dug into the turf, as if she expected blows on her capacious chest. The silk gown she wore was blown back, so that it clung to her in front and floated free in the rear, like the garments of the Louvre Nike.

Scott caught the outline of the inevitable harness; the contours of her legs were everywhere visible; the legs themselves were apart and bore a ludicrous resemblance to a draughtsman's compass. Mrs. Gibson's voice was raised to a shout and she brandished an imaginary javelin.

Geraldine was in an attitude of defense and watched her mother with a wary eye. She was in white as usual, a dash of tawny colour at her girdle.

All at once Mrs. Gibson advanced a step, shot out an arm and gave the girl a resounding slap in the face.

"Oh, my God!" cried Scott, thunderstruck.

Geraldine stood transfixed, one hand to her cheek.

Mrs. Gibson's jaw dropped; she was obviously dismayed at what she had done.

Then an incredible thing happened. The women rushed for each other. In a moment Geraldine was clasped to her mother's breast and the two were sob-

bing ecstatically. Mrs. Gibson patted the girl's head, crooned over her, soothed her with vigorous protestations of love and anguish. The dénouement was ludicrous, comic even, and yet superb; it was pathos on a vast scale.

The fit of weeping over, mother and daughter moved off towards the house. Their arms were linked; they mopped their eyes and smiled.

After they had disappeared, Scott took out his handkerchief and dabbed at his forehead.

"What a marvelous, impossible pair!" he muttered.

And he had just been counting on a conventional flirtation with one of them!

## CHAPTER VI

JULY-came and with it the season. People had prophesied pyrotechnics; it proved a rather disappointing period. Mrs. Gibson entertained extravagantly, of course. So did everybody else, for that matter.

Geraldine, however, failed to live up to expectations. Her beauty provoked admiration; but she was so calm, so dignified and unaffected that she made one uneasy. Nobody knew how to take her. The young people had been prepared to troop about at her heels and to rush headlong, under her guidance, from one wild scrape to another; the older set, likewise, had foreseen an orgiastic summer.

Geraldine fooled the whole crowd. She was less vivacious than other girls; instead of chattering gaily from morning till night, she dealt out words with discrimination. She did not keep a topic going for any length of time; she would move straight to the point, in the most businesslike way imaginable, voice a dry or a caustic comment and dismiss the subject.

It was disconcerting; it took the wind out of people's sails. Geraldine in conversation resembled a shrewd bargain-day customer; she faced one over the counter, fingered for a mo-

ment the wares one was ready to discuss and laud by the hour, and then with a polite smile passed on.

The girl's very presence in a house seemed somehow a tacit insult. She dwarfed one's most exquisite ball-room decorations; she reduced one's daughters to puppets.

The trouble was, everybody realized vaguely, that Geraldine did not belong in a gathering of ordinary, flesh and blood mortals. It was impossible to make her fit into the human picture; she should have been reared up on a pedestal and placed at a distance, where her sublimity could have been appreciated, her aloof smile marvelled at, and where she wouldn't have interfered with anybody.

Geraldine amazed and bewildered people; they couldn't have told with any clearness just what their feelings were in regard to her. They had soon decided at any rate that they did *not* like her. In a month's time they had stigmatized the unfortunate girl as "unpopular."

Theodore Scott could understand the general protest; he, too, was a victim of Geraldine's grandeur; yet, strangely enough, he glimpsed ever and again her yearning for sympathy. After all, she was only nineteen; she wanted people to like her.

"Poor child," he would say to himself, "it's a shame!"

Her life, he reflected, had been barren, unprofitable. She had been overshadowed from the beginning by her incredible mother; she had always been cut off from every-day human comradeship, shut up somewhere away from the world. No wonder she did not know how to act! The poor girl was shy, timid to a degree; of that he was sure.

He watched her with intensity throughout the summer. It was immensely pitiful to behold her, quiet and commanding, on the fringe of things.

The young people soon made a point of holding her off at arm's length. At the beach she would stride up to a group of gossiping débutantes, sit with them and strive to be one of them; the

circle would close in, gradually but inexorably, and Geraldine would in the end find herself outside. It was the same at the Casino. Geraldine thrashed all the girls at tennis, did it rudely, too, it was said; soon she found difficulty in getting anybody to oppose her over the net. Even the men, urged on by their women, aligned themselves against her. Had it not been for a persistent allegiance to Mrs. Gibson, the ostracism would have been complete.

Geraldine was a Prescott—and, needless to say, proud. She gave people a fair chance; finding an unconquerable hostility on every side, she squared her shoulders, turned her back and went her lonely, unhappy way. It was not in her to conciliate others at the expense of her own self-respect. She had soon become in truth the insolent person of Newport's imaginings.

Of all the young crowd, Charles Ridgeway alone achieved intimacy with Geraldine. But such an intimacy! The girl treated him like a dog; in return Ridgeway teased her blithely, took without wincing the insults she gave him and in general acted as if she were an ugly colt he was breaking in.

The chap was frankly a reprobate; for him no woman merited respect. He knew he was handsome, positively flaunted his good looks. Geraldine's hauteur tickled his sense of the ludicrous. He would face her anger in easy insolence and burst into roars of laughter when she tried to hurt him.

"That's right, Gerry," he would cry, "hit hard—below the belt if you want to. I don't care a damn."

Mrs. Gibson had anticipated a triumphant season; the effect upon her of Geraldine's failure may well be imagined. She soon lost all control over her temper; she rushed about constantly in a mad rage. She fumed, she fretted. The servants mutinied at least twice a week. Bedlam reigned. She fought with her daughter, abused her friends roundly. Nobody dared even attempt to bring her to reason. The absurdity, the needlessness of the fiasco kept her at the boiling-point.

Mrs. Gibson appreciated her daughter's worth. She knew the girl was the most exquisite creature that she or anyone else had beheld for years. Every day she would summon Geraldine and examine her with cold discernment. At times she wished there was a flaw somewhere, a weak point in the armour of beauty, something to put one's hand on and remedy. The first Prescott who had ever failed! The thought was unbearable.

The fault was entirely Geraldine's, of course; Mrs. Gibson took that for granted. What could be the girl's object? If only she would make an effort, people would be grovelling at her feet in no time. This catastrophe must be the result of a hitherto unperceived nastiness in her disposition. She was venting spite, the mother decided, paying off old scores by refusing to qualify socially; no other possible explanation presented itself.

It never occurred to Mrs. Gibson that Geraldine was an unformed, immature girl, leagues behind her own body in worldly grace. Shy? Diffident? Mrs. Gibson would have dismissed the words as preposterous. She had forgotten that Geraldine had lived nineteen years in seclusion; she saw only that the girl was beautiful, that she *should* be confronting the world and wresting admiration from it, and that as a matter of fact she was exhibiting herself in a fit of silly sulks. Mrs. Gibson therefore resorted to rattan-like treatment and made life unbearable for herself, her daughter, the servants, everybody in short who happened to come within earshot.

Mrs. Gibson's entertainments were famous for their brilliancy, had been famous for twenty years.

This summer she was lavish even beyond her wont. She gave weekly dances that were superb in external trappings. The entire first floor of her house was converted every Friday night into a veritable bower of roses; the floral effects were magnificent. The grounds, too, were tricked out to perfection. Fountains plashed, a

myriad of fairy lights twinkled, orchestras strummed; but the affairs fell short every time. Mrs. Gibson glittered and glared; Geraldine moved from room to room in slow majesty. The air was heavy with forebodings; the effect of all the splendour was ominous, oppressive.

Nobody knew just what the matter was; it was obvious, though, that people did not enjoy themselves. Gaiety flagged early—that is, the gaiety of everyone but young Ridgeway. The rich display seemed somehow vulgar and garish.

It had ever been Mrs. Gibson's art in the past to make her guests forget their expensive setting; it had been her gift to impart something of the jollity that Christmas trees and birthday parties had contributed in childhood days. Now the spirit of devil-may-care fun was absent.

Mrs. Gibson took to dealing out insults right and left. She was courting disaster, she knew; this, however, did not deter her.

She resorted at last to tableaux vivants for charity. On the ninth of August, she crowded the entire summer colony into her ballroom—at the point of the bayonet, as it were.

The night was hot; people sweltered and complained. The entertainment was excessively long-drawn-out. Mrs. Gibson had reserved Geraldine's picture for the last thing on the program. She posed as Burne-Jones' *Circe*—this on Theodore Scott's suggestion. The tableau was astoundingly beautiful. Geraldine seemed of immense stature.

"If she stood up straight, her head would bump against the ceiling," whispered a woman in the front row.

She was tawny, tigerish, lithe and terrible. Her white arms were positively amazing, they were so long, of such serpentine power. People should have burst into acclamations; instead, the applause was a mere patter. Chairs had begun to scrape and fans to flutter before the curtains had closed. The thing was too eccentric and unconven-

tional to be appreciated. The feline attitude was voted ludicrous.

"She looked too much like a baseball pitcher," commented somebody.

"Just what *was* the idea?" Charley Ridgeway was at a loss. "Had Circe been eating green apples?"

Mrs. Gibson found it difficult to forgive Scott for his interference. She scolded him vigorously the next time she saw him; but, for her, the dressing-down was gentle.

In her heart she cherished gratitude towards the man; for, throughout that unfortunate summer, he had been Geraldine's champion, a true pattern of medieval chivalry. He had kept at the girl's side from the beginning; not once had he faltered. With him alone Geraldine was at ease. He had been her father's friend; he had given her pretty gifts from the time she was a baby. He had even—a very rock of patience—taught her to ride a bicycle when she was ten years old. The moonlight swim had shown her the bond still held; it had also prepared the way for a new and conceivably disturbing relation.

Subsequent events had not fulfilled expectations in that line. Scott had made no further tender advances. He had become more and more respectful as time went on; he often frankly prostrated himself at the girl's feet. This never failed to annoy Geraldine; she would give him a scornful look and try her best to make him see what a fool he was. She would even in high dudgeon send him away and beckon Ridgeway to her side.

Scott, who early had begun to get glimpses into his companion's mind, to understand what a simple child she was, strove valiantly to strike a note half-fatherly and half-fraternal; his success was but an indifferent one.

There were moments when he felt he was head over heels in love with her; he would watch her mouth, recall with remarkable vividness the firm feel of it under his own lips. He would hesitate on the brink of a declaration; then, without warning, the old Scott

conservatism would fasten upon him. He could hear the axes chopping down his trees, see the army of workmen billeted upon him directly the honeymoon was over.

With a sigh not all of relief he would step back from the dizzy verge. The vision of Geraldine the goddess would take the place of Geraldine the girl, yielding to his embrace. If it wasn't a question of stentorian Hera at his fireside, he would at least be dealing in future with a fickle, destructive Aphrodite. Better the votary's awe every time than the lover's ardour, he decided.

In a flash, the danger overcome, he would find himself pitying the girl, yearning to draw her curly head down on his shoulder and to comfort her. Decidedly, it was a unique thing, Scott's attitude towards Geraldine Gibson.

Mrs. Gibson accosted Scott one morning at the Casino.

"Give me a moment, Theodore," she commanded with a tragic smile. "I must talk to you about my horrible Geraldine. What shall I do with her? She is ruining me; people will soon begin to treat me like the commonest sort of climber. It's already got to the point where the graceful thing for me would be to decamp, clear out, run away. Of course, I can't bring myself to do that without first putting up a fight. Can't you reason with the child, Theodore? She ignores *me*. I feel somehow that you are the only living person in her good graces. Argue with her, Theodore; bully her, I beg of you. She's beautiful; she's sweet—at least she *can* be sweet when she wants to. I haven't a doubt she's sweet to you and to Charley Ridgeway. This is my plan, Theodore. I am having my yacht put into commission. I shall entertain some people on it next week. Can't you plead with Geraldine, insist on her behaving nicely? It may not be too late to erase the first dreadful impression she's made. You will help me, Theodore? As an old friend I ask it. Geraldine will do whatever you ask her

to. She dotes on you, my dear man."

Mrs. Gibson placed a hand on Scott's arm.

"Simply *dotes* on you," she repeated. "The poor child is not happy; if only you could be the one to bring her to her senses."

With this broadside she left him.

The lady was not subtle.

Scott saw at once what she was driving at.

Her social prestige was being jeopardized; what more natural, after all, than the match-making policy? With Geraldine off her hands—well off her hands, too—she would be able once more to soar to a position of unchallenged supremacy.

Scott's shrug and slow head-shake were not the most encouraging portents in the world.

Geraldine's mother had blundered; she had aroused the century-old antagonism between the two families.

## CHAPTER VII

ONE afternoon, as Scott lingeringly went the rounds of his estate, the sound of a footstep nearby brought him a pause. He turned; Geraldine was perched on the old stone-wall.

At the first glance, she seemed as calm and cool as usual; hand on hip, she surveyed him.

Scott smilingly helped her down; then he noticed a flush on her cheeks, a peculiar dilation of the eyes. The faint violet tint beneath her lids made that portion of her face appear sunken. Her gown of salmon-pink chiffon was exquisitely soft and fresh, her hair dressed with skill; yet somehow it struck Scott that the girl stood before him in disarray.

She was wretched and weary; her costume failed to conceal the droop of fatigue. Geraldine had been spending the day in a darkened room; she had cried her eyes out. Scott had needed but a moment's scrutiny to convince him of that.

Geraldine pointed out a bench under an immemorial elm.

"Let's sit down—there," she suggested.

"I am a fool, of course," she announced, after he had dropped down beside her. "It's very silly to fret about being a failure, isn't it?"

"It's very silly for *you* to fret about anything, Geraldine," he returned.

"This summer has been ghastly," she pursued. "Every morning when I get up I have the memory of the night before to discourage me. That is bad enough, heaven knows; but I've also got on my mind the terrible fear of the night that's coming."

"But you *mustn't* let what's coming scare you," Scott protested. "These dances and dinners are so frivolous and unimportant. If you'd only realize what foolish things they are, you'd soon get over your stage-fright."

"Perhaps I should," said Geraldine; "but mother won't allow me a moment's peace, Theodore. She doesn't give me time to think the thing out. She scolds and shouts and boxes my ears from morning till night. I think mother feels that everything will come out beautifully if she can succeed in making a nervous wreck of me before the end of August."

Scott laughed and indulgently patted one of the girl's long hands.

"It isn't a joke, I assure you," complained Geraldine. "I have reached the end of my resources. Tomorrow night there's going to be a dinner on the yacht, you know. Mother and I will have a row tonight, I'm sure, and several tomorrow. Mother's capacity for brawls is unlimited."

Suddenly she leaned closer to Scott.

"Mine *isn't*, Theodore," she told him. "Mine *isn't*," she repeated with a world of conviction in her tone.

Scott looked deep into her eyes; the light of anger burned in them. It would not be long before the standard of revolt flapped in the breeze, he reflected.

He pitied Geraldine with all his heart; but at the same time he felt a vague terror as he watched the flicker-

ing, disturbing fires under the white lids.

He turned his head away.

"It's much safer, Geraldine, never to lose control over oneself," he advised gravely. "We're very apt to find that things were far better *before* we lit out and dug with our claws."

"You talk as if I had some cold-blooded plan, as if I had a knife up my sleeve," commented Geraldine with impatience. "I haven't, Theodore. I don't want to do horrid things; I'm afraid, desperately afraid—that is the point. I don't blame mother," she explained. "I know how disappointed she is, how her pride is hurt. She feels, you see, that I'm spoiling the whole show on purpose. Since she can't hear, she can't be expected to understand. But—" again the note of earnestness, as of facing the facts squarely—"there are limits to what one can endure, Theodore."

With that, she got to her feet abruptly.

"I'm sure I don't know why I have told you this," she said. "I have horrified you, haven't I?"

She gave him a calm glance.

"Please don't worry. I probably shan't murder mother, after all."

Again their eyes met. Geraldine's were stilled now, serenely blue. She smiled apologetically and held out her hand.

"Forgive me," she pleaded. "I couldn't help getting all this tommyrot off my mind. Don't bother to see me over the stile, Theodore. I can find my way."

She turned and sauntered off.

When he was alone, Scott sank down on the bench and with wrinkled brows contemplated the ground at his feet.

He was puzzled. He could not for the life of him make out just what the girl had been after. There had been a strange, baffling gleam somewhere in the quiet depths of her eyes as they had rested at the last in his; it haunted him and made him feel a burden of discouragement, an inexplicable sense of failure. It was as if she had tested

him, found him wanting and had conveyed a rebuke in all gentleness. Damn it all, he fumed, what under the sun had she expected from him? He could not tell; but, none the less, he cursed himself for a coward.

Scott's fit of sadness persisted through the evening. He dined out, perceived he was boring the women on either side of him and decided against going on with the other guests to the big dance he had planned to attend. The Gibsons had failed to show up at the dinner; their absence caused him uneasy conjectures.

Ten o'clock found him in his library; he ferreted out "L'Ile des Pingouins." The brilliant shafts of satire seemed to drop short of the mark. He sighed and put the volume aside.

His eyes wandered to one of the French windows open on the terrace.

All at once he straightened, with a stifled exclamation.

Geraldine Gibson stood before him, framed by the lighted square, erect and beautiful against the night.

The effect was startling, as if she had suddenly taken form, thrown off a cloak of invisibility. She was in a gown of pearly satin, cut very low; there were big pearls around her neck. Her face was white, fixed in an expression of pale fury.

She took one step and was in the room with him.

"I warned you, Theodore," she said, as she faced him. "We've had a final row—a smash-up."

She swayed, then drew herself up. "We had it out," she persisted. "We're through with each other now—no doubt whatever of that."

"My dear girl," protested Scott, "you're unstrung; you don't know what you're saying."

Geraldine tossed her head with weary impatience.

"But I *do* know," she told him. "I'm not going back; that's the long and short of it."

"That is absurd." Scott was stern. "You have no place to take shelter

in. An unprotected girl can't set herself adrift like this, Geraldine. For heaven's sake, be sensible. If your mother has been cruel she will be sorry enough for it in the morning."

"I saw the light in your library," Geraldine pursued, paying no attention to his words. "I came—to ask your advice."

"I've just given it," returned Scott. "Go back now to bed. You will be ashamed of yourself tomorrow."

They were silent for a long moment. Geraldine trembled a little and bit her lips. Scott, confronting her, showed a rigid disapproval of this child's-play. The girl, too, was firm, her thrown-back head implacable as Electra's; there was something baleful, almost matricidal about it.

A shiver raced up Scott's spine. Then, of a sudden remembering how young she was, he shrugged deprecatingly; the situation merited nothing better than ridicule, he decided. What right had she to annoy him with her silly tantrums, force herself upon him at this unearthly hour?

They continued to watch each other with an unwavering gaze. Scott forgot everything but his determination not to blink.

Geraldine broke the painful pause.

"If there had been any relief in sight, I might have stood it for a while longer," she said; "but there seemed no chance of that."

Her voice broke.

"If there was hope *now* of things changing, I"—she hesitated, waiting for him to catch it up; he said nothing—"I might be able to go on," she wound up feebly.

Into the girl's eyes there had stolen a mute appeal, a pitiful dumb yearning. The man, confused by the crisis, did not see it. At that instant she was just a tragic child, tortured by the injustice of her lot, frightened and dazed by what she had done.

"There isn't a bit of hope; things wouldn't change." Her words were those of resignation. She was no longer bold, a creature of fine anger. She

was timid, helpless, not daring to follow out the hint she had dropped.

"Go back?" she articulated at last. "I can't—I won't do that."

"You are behaving like a baby." Scott remained inflexible. "Don't you know, Geraldine, that one always goes back after a family quarrel? Of course you know it; *you* are going straight back."

He paused and examined her with intensity. "You are coming to your senses at this very moment. You are beginning to see how things are. Isn't that so?"

With firm fingers he grasped her wrists and shook her lightly.

With a lightning-like motion she snatched her hands away. The touch had aroused her to the point of decision.

"You tell me to go back?" she asked. "You think I have no right to assert my independence? You think I should smother my pride?"

"I tell you to go back," was all Scott said.

"Very well." Geraldine recoiled; the man, seeing in her a sign of yielding, had stepped forward impulsively.

"I will go back, Theodore," she let him know. "Don't come with me, if you please."

She turned from him and swept out of the room.

Scott took up his position at the French window.

The girl walked slowly the length of the terrace, now merely a glimmer of lustrous white, now a distinct, radiant figure as she passed a lighted window. Without a single glance backwards she descended the steps; there came to Scott the sound of crunching gravel. He watched her striding over the lawn. Then the gigantic trees engulfed her.

A half hour later, Scott shook himself savagely and, stepping out on the terrace, began to pace up and down.

The realization that he loved Geraldine had come to him at last. As she had faced him in the library, she had aroused in him all the old admiration, with its admixture of unreasoning ter-

ror and downright disapproval. She had been the creature to marvel at and to keep clear of. Now! He muttered imprecations on his own head. During the brief scene she had been there for him to gather to his breast; she had begged in her strange way for pity, for comfort and protection. And he had thrust her aside!

Rushing to him like a young savage, she had determined on a wild, a violent rumpus; thwarted by her own fears, she had failed, had seen the meeting degenerate into a mere prosaic scolding. It had been his fault more than hers—the feeble wind-up. Well, tomorrow he would make amends; but—a doubt that rankled—might he not already have sacrificed her love? Might he not? Might he not?

The question drummed ceaselessly in his brain, like the beat of a pulse. He called up before his mind's eye the vision of Geraldine, wide-eyed and tearless at her bedroom window, her lips shaping silent reproaches; he saw her tossing feverishly on her bed.

At the very moment he was visualizing her so melodramatically, Geraldine sat on the stairs leading over the old-fashioned stone wall and, her tousled head in her arms, sobbed out her miserable heart. If Scott had only known that, he would not have postponed his plea for forgiveness until morning.

### CHAPTER VIII

THE next afternoon, Scott learned that Geraldine had eloped—and with Charles Ridgeway. The news struck him at first as preposterous, ridiculous. He was not stunned; he took the announcement coolly. The grim irony of it impressed him—that was all. He had lunched on a friend's yacht and lingered for an hour or two. There was really no occasion for reckless haste, he had decided that morning; better give Geraldine time to view things in proper perspective. After Mrs. Gibson's dinner in the evening, he would speak.

It was already time to dress when he reached home. His valet was the one to babble out the tidings with Gallic fluency and zest. The rumour had not yet been confirmed, according to Leclercq; but—reports of elopements always *were* confirmed finally; and, Madame had cancelled the little affair on the *Perrywinkle*. Was not that in itself corroboration sufficient?

Scott informed Leclercq that he would not change right off. He left the house and walked aimlessly about the grounds. It had rained all day; the storm had cleared now, but the clouds still hung heavy. The air was damp and mists blurred everything dimly. Little pools dotted the path; toads hopped about in stupid panic.

Scott was forced to pick a gingerly way. External discomfort and the instinctive fear of squashing some of the queer monsters that pranced away from under his feet preoccupied him; it was difficult to get down to clear thinking.

He paused at last on the edge of a large puddle; the water could not have been more than three inches deep, but it seemed unfathomable. Mirrored in it was a great elm: the reflection was purged of all haze; each leaf was clear-cut. Scott prepared to leap over the muddy pool; he hesitated, realized that he had reached the tree underneath which he and Geraldine had sat on the previous afternoon. A shower of cold drops fell from the leaves, spattering him and dimpling the water at his feet. He stayed just where he was, motionless and melancholy; thought fastened on him that moment.

Scott glared around him and cursed audibly. His house, his trees struck him as so many objects to be loathed. Had it not been in their behalf that he had sacrificed Geraldine? Decay and musty damps enveloped him; the vivid, gold and ivory girl had gone out of his life for good and all. Wasn't he just one of that unsavory band of hermits who, centuries before, had burrowed into the dirt, had hidden their filthy heads in it rather than succumb to the spell of beauty?

He groaned aloud at the thought of his amazing blunder; he splashed water about in a purblind rage.

Now that he had lost Geraldine, he forgot everything but her human qualities. The Prescott grandeur, the Prescott destructiveness had vanished from his mind. He perceived only that Geraldine, with her passionate mouth, with all her physical loveliness, had been in his grasp and would never be there again. Her youth and immaturity and tenderness usurped his attention. What a wife for a man! *What a wife!*

He strode away and carried his savage despair with him. The absurd rashness of her conduct goaded him; he saw with relentless clearness why she had brought ruin tumbling down about her own ears, her mother's, his—even Ridgeway's. She had given way to childish wrath, had felt the whole world aligned against her; while she was still hot in her anger she had determined to hurt others even though she wounded herself at the same time. This marriage to Ridgeway! Could Geraldine be so blind as to expect peace and quiet, a cessation of the old brawling?

Scott halted. He had heard his own voice shouting, "Folly! Damned, God-forsaken folly!"

This brought him an abashed pause. He looked sheepishly over his shoulder. The next moment he found himself examining his hands; he couldn't tell why he was in the irrelevant act. He frowned upon them; they were not unusual at all, he reflected solemnly—slender, strong enough, not too sinewy; they bespoke the gentleman and beyond that were not distinctive.

Then, as he traced the knotted veins, he saw in a flash why they had drawn his attention. They were not the hands of a young man; that was the point. He remembered now that another ten years would see him across the threshold of middle-age; he would be forty on his next birthday.

Scott straightened wearily. He had broken with his youth; that was what his loss of Geraldine came down to.

Yesterday he had been at the cross-roads; marriage would have arrested the inevitable decline, acted upon him like an elixir. Today he felt himself abandoned; surrounded by rust and mould, with no bright presence at his side to exert a rejuvenating spell, he would in no time sink into the fatal lethargy that ushers in bodily decay.

He sighed and swore a number of big oaths in the saddest, most desultory way imaginable. Overcome by a weight of discouragement, he even went so far as to bend above the next pool he came to, with a view to dispassionate contemplation of his face. Not so bad, after all, he decided; one still wouldn't take him for a day over thirty.

When he went on his way again, he felt a little better; but soon he relapsed once more into bitter protest. It had occurred to him that at present it didn't matter *how* old he appeared; there was absolutely nothing to be gained in future, even should he retain his good looks for forty years. He had forfeited his one supreme opportunity; it wouldn't be a hardship to anyone in the world if he should wake up tomorrow a doddering idiot.

Scott found he could not bear to continue this wrestling with himself under the forbidding sky; he turned short around and hurried towards the house. As he did so, a sound of muffled pounding reached his ears. Mrs. Gibson was evidently not losing a moment; workmen were hard at it shutting up the Gothic pile.

Scott fled precipitately; every stroke of the distant hammers seemed to be driving a new nail into his coffin.

## CHAPTER IX

SCOTT soon came to his senses. He went on living as he had always lived; nobody noticed a change of any sort in him. Geraldine's image became less vivid; at the end of a twelvemonth he was able to fool himself into believing that he had been downright fortunate to escape from her toils. His solitude irked, to be sure; a burden of loneli-

ness lay heavy upon him a good part of the time.

Still, he argued with a faint show of conviction, he had always been dissatisfied in exactly this way. Ten—oh, fifteen years ago—people had made a point of expostulating with him, insisting that a man of his sort needed a wife. Had he not every time agreed with them in his inmost soul? Had he not from the first been a prey to misgivings in regard to the blessedness of bachelorhood? Of course, of course! Geraldine was by no means responsible for his occasional fits of unhappiness. Married men are often obsessed with the vision of the glorious freedom they have sacrificed; single men likewise find themselves pining, ever and again, for marital joys and responsibilities. Nobody is content with things as they are—that is the long and short of it.

So Scott insisted savagely to himself. When he felt shaky on his rhetorical pins, he called up with haste all the examples he could of Prescott unreliability and perversity. What could a man want with such a crowd, he would ask the vacant air. Above all, what common meeting-ground could a *Scott* have with one of that barbaric line? Though it had cost him a pang, he, Theodore Scott, had been true to the traditions of his family. He silently praised his conduct for hours at a stretch. He protested too much—he was aware of that, in a vague way.

Tidings of Geraldine he sought with an illogical persistency; he got them, too. The Charlie Ridgeways did not keep the world guessing as to their whereabouts and activities; they apparently were not over-anxious to circumvent the newspapers.

After the rash marriage, they hastened to Europe and remained there. American society they eschewed. Not so the nomadic, unscrupulous crowd that wanders over the Continent! Charlie, Geraldine at his elbow, once came within an inch of breaking the bank at Monte Carlo, the yellow journals reported. A Russian Grand Duke, true to his type, pursued the couple in

every direction—how successful he was remained a moot question. Geraldine's insolent beauty, her gowns, her jewels evoked printed ecstasies in at least seven languages. If one took stock in what the French said, one believed that Longchamps resolved itself into a mere setting for the "ravissante Mme. Ridgeway." The universal adulation aroused Newport's suspicions; there must be a press-agent in the background, it was decided. People, recalling their distrust of Geraldine Gibson, congratulated themselves on their good judgment; it was obvious that she had not been at home in decent surroundings. Scott chimed in with the general condemnation.

One thing, however, made him horribly uneasy. Someone, returning from Europe, had remarked,

"There's not a word of truth in all this fuss—that is, so far as Geraldine's concerned. Charlie's in it up to the ears, of course; but not *she*! She's living very quietly—somewhere away from the hurly-burly. *I know*, because I've seen her."

It was disconcerting; it aroused in Scott the old feeling of guilt and treachery. Still—and he dismissed the intriguing thought with venom—people always *did* know, always *had* seen, when as a matter of fact they *didn't* and *hadn't*. (That was the way he phrased it to himself.) Well, he *didn't* believe a word of it. Somewhere away from the hurly-burly indeed!

Mrs. Gibson, during the winter after Geraldine's marriage, made things go very well, socially speaking, in New York. The disastrous summer at Newport was forgotten. With success, generosity and the maternal throb of affection returned. Mrs. Gibson sailed in April for Europe; there was a spectacular reconciliation between mother and daughter in Paris.

For almost three years, people had Geraldine's triumphs crammed down their angry throats. Scott in particular felt that his digestion suffered; at times his gorge rose. He continued, however, on the search for news. Like

everyone else, he was waiting for the first hint of the brewing storm; he could not have told, to save his neck, what his feelings would be when the crisis came.

It was all over before anybody knew it even threatened. Geraldine obtained a decree of absolute divorce in Paris. People felt horribly cheated. Scott was stunned, too dazed to think at all for the time being. When his mind cleared, he found that one idea overshadowed every other; Geraldine, at present the woman of poise and experience, would most certainly not waste a moment on him.

Scott had schooled himself, those three years, into something like equanimity. Geraldine thousands of miles away was not very terrifying. The moment she got her divorce, however, the report spread that she would soon return to the States.

Immediately Scott became tortured by doubts and fears. She loomed before his mind's eye—cold, cruel, the avenging goddess. He had but lately been afraid she would ignore him; now, with a hunted, driven feeling, he longed to be passed over without a sign of recognition. He knew himself for a feeble, helpless creature; he could see himself scurrying off, like a toad, from beneath her conquering tread. Never before had he so intensely craved neglect.

In April, Geraldine and her mother sailed for New York. Scott, in his Newport seclusion, trembled. During the first week in May, the sound of hammering assailed his ears. He rushed for the vantage-point of the old stone wall. Half a dozen bustling workmen were visible on the Gibson estate. The blow was about to fall then; Mrs. Gibson was having her house unboarded. In another week she and Geraldine would be on the scene.

## CHAPTER X

THE meeting was commonplace enough on the surface. Geraldine, the day after her arrival, scaled the stone

wall; Scott, who had been indulging in a surreptitious peek at the Gibson grounds, stood discovered at her feet and murmured a surprised greeting. He managed to hit a careless, informal note, though his heart hopped in his breast.

"My dear Geraldine!" he exclaimed. "I am so glad to see you."

"Thank you, Theodore," she returned and held out both her hands.

He grasped them eagerly and, while he still shook them, drew her down beside him on the old steps.

"Your place is just the same," she remarked casually. "Ours isn't, of course. Mother has had the house re-decorated and the gardens fixed up a bit. Things aren't completed yet; the plumbers won't be through their job for a week."

"How well you look!" Scott commented.

"And you, too," Geraldine answered. "You and Mother never grow a day older."

Scott smiled and patted her hands; if the girl had expected to see him wince, she was disappointed.

"Your mother is as well as ever?" he queried.

"Oh, yes!" Geraldine nodded. "We get on quite well now; we're not thrown together so much, you see."

"Splendid!" Scott voiced his enthusiasm. "You go your way and your mother goes hers—is that it?"

Again Geraldine nodded. "I'm not the blunderbuss I used to be."

"I should think not!" cried Scott.

"I can look out for myself at present," she pursued. "I don't disgrace Mother any more by my clumsiness. I have interests of my own; I'm perfectly content and happy. It's the same with Mother."

"I understand," Scott was sympathetic. "You live under the same roof, but your paths don't cross."

"Our paths don't cross," echoed Geraldine. "I know today that the sensible thing is to keep one's path away from other people's."

"Ah, Geraldine!" Scott became per-

sonal. "You are warning me off, I'm afraid."

"Not at all, Theodore," she protested coolly. "I'm just telling you for your comfort that I don't intend to get into your way again."

"You are doing no such thing!" Scott persisted. "You are saying 'Keep off' very delicately."

"But why should I do that?" she queried. "You never *have* bothered me. I'm sure you never *will*, either."

"Then we're to have no more jolly swims?" he complained.

"Oh, I hope we shall." She was quick. "Friends' paths don't get tangled up with each other. They run parallel, don't you know; they aren't in danger of intersecting."

"You have put me in my place, I must admit," said Scott. "I'm only the foolish chap that taught you to ride a bicycle. I'm an old fool—the sort one has to be nice to. Very well, Geraldine, I quite understand."

She did not attempt to contradict him.

"Tell me, Theodore," she demanded, "do you think I have changed at all?"

"The change is obvious, it seems to me," he told her. "As you say, you are perfectly able to look out for yourself. I don't wonder at it; I expected nothing less."

"I am as hard and unlovely as a porcelain bathtub—is that what you mean?" Geraldine laughed softly.

"By no means." Scott denied it. "You may be as cold, but you're much more beautiful."

"I must be going," Geraldine suddenly announced and got to her feet. "Come and see us *soon*, Theodore. Mother has a great deal to say to you. She's planning to have you dine with us almost every night."

Scott faced her.

"Why did you come here today, Geraldine?" he asked.

"What a silly question!" Geraldine puckered her forehead, as if at a loss.

"Come, be honest," the man pleaded.

"Well"—she deliberated—"I'm not perfectly certain, I'm afraid."

"Oh, but you are; don't deny it my dear girl." Scott was incisive.

"Perhaps I wanted to show you how foolish you would be if—" She hesitated.

"If?" he urged.

"If you attempted to make love to me." She completed the sentence quietly, with calm deliberation. "That sounds crass, doesn't it?"

He was silent.

"The point is," she elucidated, "I wasn't subtle three years ago. I did my best then to make you fall in love with me. It occurred to me this morning that you might think I *still* was waiting—for you to act. I assure you I'm not, Theodore. You are safe now. I like you; I know you're admirable. But I'm not in love with you today."

"You put your case like a judge," he said. "Don't be alarmed in future, Geraldine. I shan't so much as broach the subject."

When she had gone, he sank down again wearily on the rickety steps.

"Damn the minx!" he muttered. "So she's decided to treat me like a grandfather."

Geraldine had assuredly not flattered him; she had sat at his side and dealt out covert insults in the blandest, coolest manner conceivable.

Scott was angry; he decided he rather disliked the girl. Make love to her? A thousand times no! Her beauty even was chilling now; he set it down as glacial.

"But glaciers melt," he reflected; and Geraldine's exterior was frozen for good and all. It was really a pity. He hated hard women.

In his heart of hearts, Scott knew he was wretched, terribly hurt by Geraldine's attitude. A suspicion grew, as he went over the conversation point by point; could she have meant what she said or had she merely determined to prove to him at all costs that her skin was whole? This doubt arrested his attention; he pondered over it.

In the end, he relapsed into inertia. Of course she had meant what she said, he informed himself. The scene they

had just had was exactly what he had prophesied. Ridgeway and three years of Europe had been the forcing-house. Her beautiful immaturity and her elemental majesty had been sacrificed; she was at present only a brightly polished woman of the world.

"A porcelain bathtub," he said aloud, with no gleam of amusement in his eyes.

Scott felt of a sudden old and desperate. He went to bed early that night, furiously protesting that Geraldine meant nothing to him now; he was free of her for good—not a doubt of it, not a *doubt* of it. Wouldn't he go right to sleep, the moment his head touched the pillow? It wasn't till well after midnight that he was able to keep his lids down over his eyes. One o'clock struck dolefully; two o'clock! Scott swore with a wild insistence. By three he had dropped off at last.

He awoke with a start. Someone was pounding at his door; there was a strange, pinkish glow on the wall at which he was staring. What was the trouble, he wondered?

All at once, he saw Leclercq; the fellow had burst in on him, was jabbering away excitedly. What the devil!

"Madame Gibson! Madame Gibson!" screamed Leclercq; a blind shot up under his hand.

Scott sat up and peered through the window.

The whole sky was red; with a bewildered exclamation, he tossed the coverings aside and jumped to the floor. He stood still, his heart pumping, the blood surging in his veins.

Back of his trees, he had seen a great sheet of flame that towered into the dark sky, leaping up higher and higher as he watched. A mighty roar filled the room, deafened him, drowned Leclercq's hysterical enthusiasm. A livid light played over everything.

Scott swayed. He tried to take a step and his knees refused to support him; he felt sick, faint. A breeze danced about his legs; it was hot. A confused mutter reached him, then a persistent clang and the diabolical

shriek of sirens; engines were speeding through the night.

The clamor brought him to his senses. He stumbled about, shouted at Leclercq, scrambled into whatever garments the fellow offered. He shook all over, his teeth sounding like castanets. Before he was aware of leaving the room, he realized he was half across the lawn. Grotesque figures ran beside him, in front, to the rear; he must have ordered the servants to the rescue! The fact that he had left his own house unguarded did not worry him. He didn't care a damn for the rattle-trap, he reflected savagely; he cared about nothing in the wide world but Geraldine's safety.

The fiendish din grew; the fire shot to an immense height and seemed to lick at the stars. Sparks sailed high in air. He could hear engines panting and snorting. The sea of flame increased in volume and sound; it mounted, tore an inexorable way, rent the blackness; it hummed and boomed and crackled. Scott rushed over the stone-wall, barking both shins without knowing it.

The Gothic pile was magnificent, colossal. The trees that ordinarily kept it from view at this point were now only a delicate and transparent screen. The mansion dominated everything. The huge square tower was silhouetted against the flickering, pale-orange background; the battlements stood out distinct and black. Every window in the house was a solid flame.

Scott rushed on. An angry hissing reached his ears; at the same moment he perceived the graceful arcs of water picking a dainty way over the stone surface, crossing each other as they did so; they might have been so many rainbows robbed of their iridescence or the jets of an immense fountain.

Scott paused, gasping for breath. Overwhelmed by the ghastly horror of the scene, he did not for the instant dare to go farther. What if escape had been cut off? He shut his eyes; clammy drops started out on his forehead.

A crash and a wild shout aroused him. The roof had collapsed. The thunder of its fall shook the ground; the hollow reverberations died away dully. A rain of sparks was fanned by the momentary rush of air to a stupendous height. The points of fire floated serenely above the tumult.

It was the strength of utter despair that impelled Scott now. He dashed ahead and groaned out his misery. His love for Geraldine mastered him, choked him. If she was safe, he would crush all opposition; he would have her in his arms again, let her struggle against it as much as she pleased. He would make her *his* alone. Events had forced the issue.

The grounds were thronged by people in all stages of undress. Laughter rang out; the spirit of holiday adventure animated everyone. Even in his anguished daze, Scott noted the general jollity and was reassured. Ignoring the curses of policemen, he ducked under the ropes and made across the lawn to the house.

All at once he heard a cry coming from the throats of the crowd at his back, then a universal intake of breath. The sound was revolting—the sentimental murmur of a mob that is being treated to something deliciously horrible. Scott swore silently at the brutes.

Then, right before his eyes, he beheld two men with a sheeted something in their arms. The long, terrible figure appeared majestic even as it was laid on the ground to suffer the desecration of the rabble's sorrow.

"Geraldine!" Scott whispered. He sagged and fell forward on his face.

He awoke to the sound of Mrs. Gibson's voice.

"If Mr. Scott feels moved to faint on my lawn, he has my permission. It is not the business of the police department. You may keep the townspeople back of the ropes; you may hit them over the head if you wish to. You mustn't interfere with me, however, nor with Mr. Scott. My daughter and I will see to him."

Mrs. Gibson was engaged in an altercation with a burly minion of the law; she had taken it for granted that he was being uncivil about poor Scott's collapse.

"Mrs. Gibson has misunderstood you." Geraldine's voice! *Geraldine's voice!* "She doesn't realize that you are trying to keep her out of danger. Please don't feel hurt."

Scott's eyes were open now. The two women, dishevelled and majestically solicitous, were bending over him. The man gave them a twisted smile of apology.

"Devilish sorry," he faltered.

"Not at all, Theodore," Geraldine protested.

She rushed away, followed by her mother. In the midst of the glare and intense, scorching heat, they took up a commanding position. Geraldine could be heard giving orders in a high, clear voice; Mrs. Gibson, not to be outdone, shouted commands that for the most part contradicted her daughter's. Servants scurried about among piles of furniture. Confusion reigned. A column of water leaped from the firemen's control, gutting what had been saved from the drawing-room and drenching Mrs. Gibson. The lady screamed execrations.

Through the tumult Geraldine strode triumphant. Her hair had escaped from the few hastily adjusted pins and streamed down her back. The white morning-robe she wore showed jagged tears and dripped water. Nothing daunted, she swept from place to place regardless of peril. The servants were awestruck and obeyed her every word. Her voice had lost its tone of quiet reserve; into it there had crept a strident, trumpeting note—a delirious, raucous drunken chant her utterance seemed. Her coppery mane gave her the aspect of a Fury or a fierce Mænad. She appeared wild, exultant. So must the Olympians have looked while Troy thundered into ruin beneath them.

Scott, dazed by this new aspect of the classic Geraldine, got feebly to his feet and struck off the obsequious Le-

clercq; he wanted to follow the girl, into the teeth of the flames, if need were. He lurched, stumbled and caught at the valet's extended arm.

"Who was that—under the sheet?" he queried suddenly.

"Madame's maid," came Leclercq's ready response. "She was trapped, overcome for the moment."

"Where is she now?" Scott sought to keep his voice steady.

"In the thick of it—with Mademoiselle Geraldine. She soon came to."

Scott groaned. He alone had failed, then!

Leclercq guided him to shelter and had a chair brought; Scott, feeling old and infirm, sank upon it.

In the distance, the figures of Geraldine, her mother and the menials darted to and fro. All at once, Scott perceived that they were rushing up to him, their arms laden. Two men deposited a huge Louis Quinze dresser at his feet. Mrs. Gibson was carrying an ornate clock. Geraldine piloted a chair. Objects accumulated about him. The pile grew until it impended dangerously over him, reached above his head, even shut out from him the conflagration.

Then at last he got the significance of it all. They were moving to a safe distance everything that had been rescued. And here was he, Theodore Scott, in the midst of the antique salvage! It was the ultimate, staggering blow.

Just at dawn, the feverish activity ceased. The turf in front of the house had been entirely cleared. Geraldine and her mother, realizing the inadequacy of handkerchiefs, mopped their dirty faces with the sleeves of their demolished robes; they stood side by side and surveyed the litter surrounding Scott. He could not bear to be included in the glance of appraisal; he got up and walked stiffly over to them.

"You are to be my guests indefinitely," he said. "I have sent my man over to make things ship-shape for you."

"Ah, thank you, Theodore," returned

Geraldine. "That will be splendid."

She grasped her mother's arms and indicated the stairs over the wall.

"How sweet!" exclaimed Mrs. Gibson. "Then we shan't have to sleep under a tree or a haystack after all. It's delightful of you, Theodore. We are tired, of course; but I'm afraid you are much wearier. The excitement has kept us up—and the joy of seeing that abominable house consumed. I refused to have it made fireproof; I hoped for just this—long before the place was finished."

They faced about for a last glance at the stupendous pile. The frame stood intact, immense and unconquerable against the rose-and-gold clouds of early morning. The flames no longer soared; they were confined inside the building, eating a slow way over the walls. Charred beams, dusted with white ashes, protruded at crazy angles from the windows. A dense mass of smoke curled upwards from the ruin and, diffusing itself in the pure air, hung like a thin, ominous cloud over the wreckage.

"Ah, Geraldine!" cried Mrs. Gibson, as if stung by remorse. "It is *beautiful!* At this moment it's what I've always tried to make it. How ghastly! Now I *know* I shan't be satisfied with the one I'm planning to replace it with." The incorrigible Prescott had spoken.

Stimulants and cozy warmth awaited them in Scott's library. Mrs. Gibson, catching her image in a mirror, fled incontinently.

"Have something sent up to me, Theodore," she demanded. "I'm too ungodly a sight to be looked at by man or beast."

Geraldine, alone with Scott, broke into a peal of excited laughter.

"Oh, Theodore, Theodore!" she cried and rocked with mirth. "This fire has pointed the way for me. It's been thrilling, glorious, gorgeous!"

Scott, preparing a drink with shaky hands, shot a frightened glance at her.

"I'm not insane; I'm just happy beyond belief," she told him. "I've

learned tonight that I'm like Mother; I'm like all the wonderful Prescotts. Can't you *see* it in me? I've come out from under a cloud. I'm free!"

The ice rattled in the glass Scott held. He stared blankly at her.

"All these years I've thought I was in love with you, Theodore," she explained. "Ever since you taught me to ride a bicycle I've been obsessed with your importance—nobody could compare with you, I've felt. I've tried to act like you—made a mouse out of myself and failed from the beginning. You remember the Newport season? It was the same in Europe; I kept out of things and antagonized my husband—because of you. It made him furious to see me persisting in my seclusion; the only comfort he got out of our marriage was through the stories he made up for the newspapers."

Geraldine leaned closer and touched Scott's hand; she burst anew into merry laughter.

"You have been to blame, Theodore. I've fooled myself right along into thinking you were the man I wanted; and, when you treated me like a divinity, I would despair of ever bringing you to the point. Why did you strike me as so heroic, I wonder? The night of our swim, the night I ran away—you weren't impressive on either occasion. Still I kept my illusions. You failed again tonight and brought me to my senses. I've run after you outrageously—even when I married, it was to hurt *you*. I came

back this spring with you in mind. I didn't mean what I said yesterday—about not making love and all that, you know. I have never been more obsessed by your importance than I was while we sat there together; I was trying out a new plan. Oh, Theodore, I have been blind! The fire has taught me that I am a Prescott and you are a Scott—worlds asunder we are. I'm vulgar, unregenerate, uncivilized; I felt like kissing the policemen and the firemen in my joy. I have come into my heritage at last. You have kept me from it till this moment. In future there will be no burrowing in the earth, I promise you."

She sprang gaily to her feet.

"I spoiled my poor husband's life," she remarked. "You will be quite sure I'm mad, Theodore, when I tell you that I am going to explain the situation to him and beg him to take me back. We should have the jolliest possible life together."

Scott wearily shook his head.

"That, Geraldine, is a stroke of genius," he let her know.

"Thank you, Theodore," she said, and swept out of the room.

Scott's mind blurred; the next thing he knew, he was examining the hand that held his glass, scrutinizing it as he had done on the day of Geraldine's marriage.

"A Scott—but an old one; a Scott run damnably to seed. An idiot Scott!" he muttered and shut his eyes, wincing in anguish at his plight.



**A** MAN'S metier may be gauged by whether he regards a kiss as a pleasant way to begin an evening or to end one.



**T**HERE are two kinds of girls. Most men like the other kind.

# Les Miserables

*By Edward Simons*

**G**IVE us a living wage!" clamoured the hungry crowd of strikers. "A living wage! A living wage!"

"I get three dollars a day, and I must have four to support my family," wailed one.

"I make four, but I can't live on less than six," lamented another.

"I earn six, but I must have eight," cried a third.

"Eight isn't enough; I want ten," shouted a fourth.

"I work ten hours a day, and I ought to work nine," came another voice.

"I'll work only eight," cried the man who worked nine.

"Six is enough," shouted the man who worked eight.

And again clamoured the hungry crowd,

"Robbers! Despots! Brutes! Give us a living wage, a living wage!"



## Souvenir

*By Muna Lee*

**Y**OU may forget the curve of my cheek,  
And the turn of my head,  
But there's one moon through the trees you'll never forget  
Till the day you are dead.

You may forget the joy of our love,  
And overlive its pain—  
But there's one day in the mist you'll not overlive,  
And one night in the rain.



**D**URING the first year of marriage the connubial conversation resembles the second act duet in "Tristan and Isolde." During the third year it resembles an exchange between two stock-tickers.

# For the World's Championship

By J. L. Morgan

THE newspapers had columns about the tragedy, including, of course, the usual diagrams, dotted lines and crosses indicating where the bodies were found. The grisly details were sickening. Three dead, and a fourth with his throat cut from ear to ear with a can-opener. Axes, hatchets, butcher-knives and a corkscrew were found in the dead men's hands, and the overturned furniture and the gory carpet and walls of the shooting lodge evidenced a terrible battle.

It was all Taylor's fault. At least he started it, and Phil is a devil of a good fellow at that. For years Taylor was one of our crowd, used to foregather with us around our own particular table in the grill-room of the club, and we all enjoyed his wit and repartee, which was very good for a lawyer. I'm throwing no slurs at lawyers, though they do talk shop a good deal.

Anyhow, to get back to Taylor, the railroad removed him to Philadelphia and we only saw him on his occasional business trips to our city; then we gave him an ovation. When Taylor came to town no one went home to dinner. That's the kind of a fellow he was. I could tell you stories by the hour about Taylor, but here I must confine myself to an account of the Duck Island tragedy, and I'll try and tell it without bias, prejudice or exaggeration.

Taylor came to town, and, as usual, something started. It was late of a rainy afternoon when he walked in on us at the club—came in grinning, with a confident anticipation of his reception, which I will say was not lacking. There were the usual glad huzzahs and he was forced immediately, and not un-

willingly, into an empty seat at the table.

I may as well admit here and now that although there had been some prohibitory legislation we were not entirely without the means of gullet-wetting. Thanks to the ingenuity of some of our legal members, a "locker system" had been installed, and while this device might land us all in jail it added a certain zest and every drink was a thrill. After about the third libation Mr. Taylor's admiration for our "system" became boundless. He expressed himself at length and with much praise of the authors thereof—of whom there were several present—and added a few suggestions of his own, involving leases, powers of attorney, and other complicated legal instruments, all of which were, of course, designed to flabbergast and numb the brain of any meddlesome official.

Highly flattered, we put our "system" through its tricks. We showed Mr. Taylor what it could do. Enthusiasm prevailed, and the wit and repartee bantered back and forth was, I may say, brilliant—or at least it seemed so to me at the time. Our guest was pressed to stay for dinner. To this demand he surrendered unconditionally, and, after some telephoning (a few of us were married) the repast was ordered. It promised to be a rare evening.

Then disaster approached in the person of Mr. Foster T. Flood.

"Look out, boys, here *he* comes!" cautioned Mr. Webster.

Immediately we dived into our pockets and produced all the letters and papers we could find and put on a

great show of a private business conference of the most secret nature. All of which availed us nothing, for Mr. Flood drew up a chair and seated himself among us. Then he started the conversational geyser for which he was infamous.

It's too long a story to tell how Flood got into our club. Slips occur in all clubs, but I venture none ever made such a ghastly mistake as ours did in admitting Flood. We had tried to rid ourselves of him by every means except assassination, and even this was suggested by the hat boy, Jimmie Ryan, who offered to have him privately killed for twelve dollars—an impertinence for which he was immediately discharged (and as quickly hired as office boy by an admiring member, and at a better salary).

Flood was, so he incessantly told us, a "self-made man." It was the consensus of opinion around the club that it was a poor job. However, he was just what he wanted to be, which was a loud, blatant nuisance.

"Just sold twelve of our XX silos and a half gross of hog troughs," he announced, pounding the bell noisily. "What are you gents going to have?"

We stared at him long, cold, silently—for which he was grateful; and we refused his invitation, for which he was even more grateful. Nothing less than a pile-driver would have had the slightest effect on him.

"Yes, sir, that XX is a sure winner," he went on. "It's got every other silo backed off the board."

Here he applied his handkerchief to his nose and blew a clarion blast, not, however, dropping a word or a syllable during the process. "It's heavily galvanized, cheap in price, and guaranteed for twenty years!"

Mr. Flood's business was, as may be guessed, that of agent for a line of patent gimcracks of interest to farmers. He was a firm believer in the advertising power of the human voice, and he extolled the perfections of his wares at all times and places.

From silos to hog troughs Flood's discourse very naturally turned, and he was in the middle of this when Billy Duncan gave Herman, our waiter, the signal. This seeming scratch of the ear resulted a few minutes later in a call to the telephone, which the bellboy told Mr. Flood was very urgent.

We watched him for the short instant that he was at the instrument at the other side of the room, and we were much relieved to see him drop the receiver and depart in hot haste.

"What did you tell him this time, Herman?" inquired Duncan, after the waiter had re-entered the room.

"I told him," replied Herman, "that his warehouse was on fire."

Herman Niemeyer, I will say, was a man of considerable diplomatic experience. For over twenty years he had been a waiter in the club grill, and he knew most of us like a father—or better. Of him, however, more later.

"Very good, Herman," commanded Duncan. "But don't forget to have another one handy for him; he might come back."

He turned to Taylor with a word of explanation: "That's one of our new members, Phil. Without doubt he's the greatest bore in the world."

"He's a pest all right," laughed Taylor. "I can see that. But as to being the greatest living nuisance, I'll have to differ with you. We have a man in our town, old Judge Fosdick, whom I would back rather freely for the world's championship. Men faint on the street when they see him coming."

"Say," put in Jim Webster, "if you're going to have a contest I want to nominate my brother-in-law. Tuttle is his name, and I'll go broke on him."

We all laughed, but Taylor became suddenly serious.

"A contest," he mused aloud. "Why not? It's a splendid idea!"

"Of course," agreed Billy Duncan, "if it were practical. But unfortunately it isn't."

"But it *is* practical," argued Taylor,

sharply. "Nothing easier in the world!"

Phil Taylor was a man of splendid imagination. And with this he had unusual talent as an organizer. With him nothing was impossible.

"How could it be arranged?" inquired Duncan, grinning.

Taylor pondered a minute.

"Well," he said slowly, "the thing to do would be to get them all together—all under one canvas, as the circus people say. Then start 'em to going, and the one who could talk down the others would be declared the winner. Of course there would be rules and all that."

"How would it do to invite them down to Duck Island?" suggested Webster. "There's no one there now and they'd have the island all to themselves."

Billy Duncan's face suddenly brightened.

"And say," he said, becoming infected with the idea, "we could have Simpson go over with the motor boat twice a day, morning and evening, and take away the quitters. The last man on the island would be the winner."

"Fine! Fine!" ejaculated Taylor. "It's as simple as a, b, c."

It was a new sort of sport, this, and we all became quite enthusiastic. Probably the drinks had something to do with it, but the idea of sponsoring a contest to decide who was the world's champion bore was both novel and pleasing.

"Of course," said Taylor, "while you club boys think highly of your fellow-member, Flood, I am rather sanguine of the success of Judge Fosdick—and I want to put some money on him, too."

The betting feature was now taken up and disposed of—thanks to Taylor—easily and quickly. It was decided to pool the bets on the Paris-mutual plan—the backers of the winner to divide all the other money between them.

The conversation as to the merits of the various contenders became general and somewhat warm. Taylor was

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strong for Fosdick; Webster touted his brother-in-law, Tuttle; and the other five raised their voices in behalf of Flood.

Now I had a candidate myself—a pinhead by the name of Jim Johnson. I knew what Johnson could do. I had seen him empty a summer hotel in a single day, and it didn't seem fair to the others to enter him. But a few drinks will make a difference. When my friends began to brag about the abilities of their own pet bores my sporting blood became aroused. I told them frankly that Johnson was in a class by himself; that he would make the other entries look like a lot of burros in a race with a Derby winner. But they only hooted. Then I got mad. I can remember, rather indistinctly, of saying something to the effect that "money talks," and of slamming a roll of bills on the table. Then things began to fade.

## II

THE next day the whole thing seemed silly. I'm sorry to say that we all had rather too much to drink—but the thing that disturbed me most was the hard, cold, undeniable fact that I had put up three hundred dollars. I hadn't the face to ask it back, and to tell the truth I don't know that I wanted it back, for Johnson looked like a cinch. However, I had an idea that the affair would be called off, and I decided to say no more about it.

But it wasn't called off. For, two days later, Billy Duncan, the stakeholder, got a letter from Taylor—enclosing a draft for two thousand dollars, and hinting of more to follow! Phil wrote that most of the money had been subscribed by the local bar, and that the news had hardly started. He hinted that within a week every lawyer in Philadelphia would have a bet down on the Judge, and, privately, he urged Duncan to get on the good thing himself.

Meantime our fellow-members were

quietly putting their money on Flood. There was a score of wagers on his chances the very first day, ranging from fifty to a thousand. At this time Fosdick and Flood seemed to be about equal in the betting, Johnson next, and Tuttle nowhere.

On the following day, Wednesday, quite by accident I ran into John B. Gage. Of course you have heard of "Bet-you-a-million" Gage. He's one of the big plungers in Wall Street, with his name in the papers most every day in connection with some huge transaction in stocks, or horse races, or just plain gambling at French Lick or Palm Beach.

Merely with the thought of entertaining Gage for a few minutes, I told him of the approaching contest. He was mildly interested, laughed, said he'd watch the papers to see the outcome, and was about to pass on, when I mentioned Johnson. Then you should have seen the change. His jaw snapped and a steely look came into his gray eyes.

"Say," he said, "is this a private game, or can anyone get in?"

Just why I let Gage in is unfathomable to me to this day. It certainly was to my interest to keep Johnson a dark horse, for with no other backers I stood to win all the money wagered on the others. But a foolish enthusiasm prevailed and I waxed loud in Johnson's praise.

"Good God, Charlie," cried Gage, "you don't have to tell me anything about Johnson. I know him!"

He pulled from his pocket a cheque-book and rapidly scribbled on it.

"Yes, sir, I traveled a day on the train with Johnson and had nervous prostration for two years. He's a second Attila!—a Genghis Khan! Here"—he handed me a cheque for ten thousand dollars, "put that on Johnson, straight, to win."

He was off and gone before I could say anything, leaving me standing on the corner with his cheque in my hand. I turned and walked slowly back to my

office, where I found Jim Webster waiting for me.

Webster's mission was only to borrow five thousand dollars—from me! I thanked him for the compliment; then I told him that I didn't have five thousand dollars, which was the truth.

"But listen, Charlie," he pleaded. "We might as well have that money as anybody. Tuttle's a cinch! We'll go in together and split fifty-fifty!"

I shook my head and told him frankly that nothing could alienate me from Johnson.

Webster listened impatiently.

"Hear me through, Charlie," he implored. "Then you can make your decision."

I sat down and my friend drew up his chair close to mine. He was terribly in earnest.

"First," he began, "let me tell you that Tuttle has had five wives. Does that mean anything to you?"

"No," I replied slowly, "I don't know that it does."

He leaned across the table, his eyes boring into mine.

"Three of them, Charlie," he said impressively, "are in as many sanitariums, and the other two died of some kind of jimmams—nerves!"

I paled. For I saw at once that Tuttle was no mean contender.

"How does he do it?" I asked.

"Just talks—that's all. Let me introduce you, Charlie, and if he don't turn you into a raving maniac in twenty minutes, I'll buy the drinks."

I declined the test.

"He's got damp hands, Charlie, and after you shake with him you've got to take a bath. And they are hot hands, too, Charlie, and he puts them all over you when he talks—on your neck, and your elbow, and your knee. He's one of those intensive talkers—gets right up in front of you, Charlie, close up, like he's going to give you a kiss—paws you all the time, and keeps asking, 'Do you get me? Do you get me?'"

"What does he talk about?" I inquired.

My tone indicated a lightness that I positively did not feel.

"Nothing! Absolutely nothing! Just prattles along like a dog on a treadmill. He never gets anywhere—but his endurance, Charlie, is marvelous! Day and night, a constant stream of words without an idea or a thought."

"He must say something," I insisted. "He'd have to utter a thought—sometime—even if it was accidental."

"Well," confessed Webster, "once I did hear tell about hitting a golf ball, or something—but, Charlie, it took him six hours to unload it, and even then I had to help him out. That was the time they had to send me to Battle Creek," he added significantly.

But I remained loyal to Johnson, notwithstanding this inside information on Tuttle. And not without cause.

Johnson was a small-town lawyer with a large, round, rich voice—the resonant, sonorous, street car, hotel lobby, elevator kind. And with it Johnson was infatuated to madness. He let it out on all occasions—modulated it with the liquid flutings of the clarionet, let it growl in the lower tones of the bass viol, boom in the deep chest tones of the kettle drum, and then allow it to work up in easy graduations on the in-take, concertina-fashion, to the whining strains of the zither. He was an officer in a score of fraternal orders and during the ceremonial rites of these Johnson lived in another world. In private life he had two themes of which he never tired. They were: (a) what he told the Court, and (b) his New England ancestry, with the various and sundry ramifications of the same. Either topic was good for six months without stopping for water, wind, or gas.

Meantime the Contest Committee had been busy. Invitations on the stationery of the Duck Island Shooting Club had been mailed, each with a lure calculated to enforce attendance. The one addressed to Judge Fosdick hinted that a cabinet minister would be present at the week-end party, as the Judge

was politically ambitious, his presence was assured.

Flood received an invitation of six words—no one ever wanted him anywhere and a more elaborate one would look like a trap.

Tuttle was told to bring his golf sticks; and the message to Johnson insinuated that it was barely possible that he might be present at the birth of a new, complicated, and highly ceremonial secret order.

The Rules Committee had framed an elaborate document of some fifty pages, covering every possible contingency, including a broad and comprehensive system of "points" by which the contestants could be graded for second, third, and fourth money. An umpire, the manner of his selection, duties, authority and so on, was thoroughly outlined in one section, and while this was an easy matter to put down on paper it was more difficult of execution. No one would volunteer; all refused to be drafted. We elected Herman, finally, who only accepted under strong compulsion and promise of rich reward.

### III

GAGE's wager of ten thousand made a sensation. It also increased the betting, for while a spectacular plunger like Gage always has a large following, there are others who play the long shots, attracted by the larger odds. So it happened that both Fosdick and Flood became more popular, and there were not a few small sums laid on the unknown—Tuttle. Nothing else was talked of at the Club.

On Thursday Taylor called up by long distance and inquired if he might bring a brass band and a special train of two thousand Fosdick rooters. Upon being denied this by the chairman, Taylor quietly informed him that a draft was in the mail and that it was to be placed on the Philadelphia candidate. It called for thirty-seven thousand dollars. Taylor further informed

him that another wager of a hundred thousand would be over-subscribed by six o'clock, and that it would be forwarded at once. He also said that a petition was being framed to make the day of Fosdick's departure a legal holiday, and that the majority of the local bar were then under alcoholic influence in anticipation thereof.

This was news, indeed! Where before there had been sensation, there was now wild excitement. Some were for calling the event off and making it international. But as a great deal of money had been wagered this could not very well be done. Moreover, it was patriotically argued that as the American bore was the deadliest of all known species, an American champion must necessarily be a world's champion. No one could controvert this, so the contest stood as originally conceived—for the world's championship.

Jim Webster showed up about five with a pitiful thirty-six hundred of Tuttle money. He said it had all been raised in the family, but that there was a rich uncle yet to be heard from, who undoubtedly would place twenty-five, maybe fifty, thousand. I think this was braggadocio on Jim's part, for I had heard him talk about that rich uncle before.

The confidence of the Fosdick following had been a mystery to me, but I was soon to be illuminated. By rare luck I had at dinner that evening a gentleman from Philadelphia, and of him I made inquiry.

"Do you know Judge Elias P. Fosdick?" I asked.

He looked startled.

"Why?" he parried.

I explained that I had heard a great deal about the Judge, and that it was possible that I might have the pleasure of meeting him at a week-end shooting party.

My friend became instantly alarmed.

"If he goes, you stay away!" he warned. "Fosdick is more deadly than the bubonic plague!"

Persistent questioning developed the

fact that the Judge was indeed a frightful bore. A quarter of a century on the bench had made him a despot; he had lost all sense of the rights of others, and his egotism was that of a Nero. He was a story-teller—so he imagined. At the noon hour, before the opening of court, and after adjournment, he dragged out his ancient wheezes for general admiration. All lawyers were expected to laugh—and to laugh loud. Those who went into the most violent paroxysms fared best in his court. The stories were originated by Adam, embellished slightly by Noah, handed down through the ages to find a final resting place in a patent medicine almanac, only to be again discovered and brought to the light by Judge Fosdick.

It was no unusual thing for him to relate some of them fifteen or twenty times in a single day. There were five of them, and the local bar knew them better than it knew the statutes. Of late years Fosdick had begun to suspect that the tales were becoming familiar, for it was his habit to preface them with: "Gentlemen, you may have heard this before, but I am sure it will bear repetition. So . . ."

But this was not all. According to my informant the Judge was addicted to another vice so ghastly and terrible as to stagger human credulity.

"He's a big man, a whale of a man," said my friend, "looks like a skinned horse—and he talks baby-talk!"

"No!" I cried. "It can not be true!"

My friend applied his handkerchief to his eyes and I saw that he was deeply affected.

"I hate to admit it," he said in a choking voice, "but it is true. Did you—did you ever . . . hear a three hundred pound man talk baby-talk?" he queried. "It's terrible—"

He broke down completely and I had to buy him a drink. Later, after he had pulled himself together, he explained that Fosdick was the parent of a nine-year-old child which, from the impression he got from Fosdick's

mimicry, was as near an absolute idiot as it is possible to be. I sent him back to his hotel in a taxi.

## IV

It was a job getting them all together on the island, but by Saturday noon it had been accomplished and they were turned loose in the small clubhouse, a happy family, as the animal trainers say. Then we waited for the first bulletin from our diplomatic representative, Herman Niemeyer.

During this wait the committee thought it wise to look into the accounts of the official stakeholder, Billy Duncan. What it discovered was truly astounding. Duncan's books showed three hundred and sixty-seven thousand dollars wagered on the contest! The Judge carried the weight of this, then came—the hitherto dark horse, Tuttle.

This surprised us all, but we learned that Webster's brother-in-law was a traveling auditor for a big railroad system and that the railroad boys were backing him to a man. From president to section hand they had planked their money down on Tuttle, and, Duncan said, if Tuttle didn't win it would be rather hard to explain. Flood had a large following in the hardware trade, and Johnson came last. This cheered me mightily, for I knew that if the race became one simply of endurance, Johnson would win in a canter.

The first word from Duck Island came to me privately and could not be considered official. It was a telegram from Herman, forwarded by the boatman, Jim Spriggs.

*"It looks like Fosdick. Put a hundred on him for me.*

*"Niemeyer."*

Now I had no intention of making a bet for one of the club servants, and the next day I was very glad that I had not done so, for I received the following:

*"Fosdick slowing up. Hedge fifty each on Tuttle and Johnson.*

*"Niemeyer."*

The official communications received from our representative and posted on the club bulletin board evidenced that the battle was going with varying fortunes and were read with great enthusiasm. The Philadelphia bar, so we learned from Taylor, had abandoned all business for the time being, and there were three head-end collisions on Tuttle's railroad. Then came a telegram from Niemeyer stating that he believed that he was losing his mind and that he wanted to get off the island at once, threatening heavy damages.

Things had gone so far now that there was nothing to do but stick it out, come what may. An ominous silence of two days followed—Spriggs, the boatman, was on a spree, but we didn't know it. Then on the third day came the news of the catastrophe.

What happened can best be learned by reading the sworn statement of Niemeyer upon his examination by the District Attorney:

My name is Herman Niemeyer. I am German, but bought liberty bonds. I have been a waiter at the Cosmos Club for over twenty years and know personally all who are responsible for the murders on Duck Island.

The plot was hatched and engineered by Mr. Philip Taylor, once a member of the club but now living in Philadelphia, and was an endurance contest to decide who among bores was the world's champion. There were four contestants: Mr. Flood, Judge Fosdick, Mr. Tuttle and Mr. Johnson. I was sent along as umpire, and was instructed to send bulletins twice each day to the club of how the contest was going.

*District Attorney* — Was there money wagered on this?

*Niemeyer* — Yes, sir. Thousands of dollars.

*District Attorney* — Proceed.

*Niemeyer* — Well, going over on the boat Saturday noon, Judge Fosdick told a story in baby-talk and the others got sick, though the water was rather smooth, the wind being from the south-east. That first day the Judge did most of the talking and I thought he would surely win. But the others hadn't started yet.

The next morning Mr. Flood rose early

and got a running start on the other three. He began on his silos, hog troughs and windmills, and was going strong when they all sat down to breakfast. Judge Fosdick tried to tell a story, but Mr. Flood drowned him out. In a few minutes he tried again, but with the same result. Then he called Mr. Flood "a damn fool!"

*District Attorney*—Did the fight begin then?

*Niemeyer*—No, sir. Mr. Flood took no offense—in fact he seemed rather pleased.

*District Attorney*—Proceed.

*Niemeyer*—Well, later in the day, at lunch I think it was, Mr. Tuttle and Mr. Johnson got into an argument—at least it sounded like an argument, though really it wasn't, for Mr. Tuttle was talking about the right way to "tee off," and Mr. Johnson was telling about a second cousin of his great grandmother—from Massachusetts, I think she was, sir—but anyhow neither of them listened to the other, but just went right along. There wasn't a bit of trouble between them, sir, and I believe they could have been life-long friends—if they had lived. They kind of stuck together—it was beautiful, sir—and when Mr. Flood tried to get in they just talked a little louder and paid no attention. That's where Mr. Flood blew up. He got right sick and we had to put him to bed.

The Judge pouted all afternoon and stayed outside, though it was raining. But that evening Mr. Tuttle got him in a corner and told him how to swing a midiron. He planted his chair right down in front of the Judge and talked to him close-up, with his hands on the Judge's knees.

*District Attorney*—Is that when Tuttle was killed with a can-opener?

*Niemeyer*—No, sir. The battle didn't happen till the third day.

*District Attorney*—Then what happened?

*Niemeyer*—The Judge began to squirm around, and he coughed as hard as he could right in Mr. Tuttle's face, but Mr. Tuttle didn't move—just batted his eyes and went on. Then I saw the Judge reach for an iron poker near the fireplace and I got right scared. But just then Mr. Johnson started in on Mr. Tuttle's right—a sort of flank movement, sir—and the Judge escaped. After that it was nip and tuck between Mr. Tuttle and Mr. Johnson. Mr. Tuttle could talk the fastest, but Mr. Johnson was the loudest.

*District Attorney*—Who won?

*Niemeyer*—Neither, sir. It was a kind of a dead heat. They talked all night and the next morning I found them asleep in their chairs.

*District Attorney*—Go on.

*Niemeyer*—Well, that day the Judge and Mr. Flood being mad at everybody talked to me and the two others joined in.

*District Attorney*—Was that when you wired a demand to be taken off the island, and threatened suit?

*Niemeyer*—Yes, sir. I was nearly crazy. They were all around me and going at once. It was terrible!

*District Attorney*—Are you quite sure that you did not kill these men?

*Niemeyer*—As God is my judge, I didn't! It happened the next day in a free-for-all among themselves.

*District Attorney*—Well, proceed.

*Niemeyer*—Things looked mighty bad that afternoon, and to make things worse the boatman, Spriggs, got drunk and never showed up till the following Friday—when, of course, it was too late. Thursday I thought I'd never live through the day. In fact I contemplated suicide. It was awful! I thought—

*District Attorney*—Never mind what you thought. Tell what actually happened.

*Niemeyer*—Well, Thursday afternoon it started in on a hard rain and everyone had to stay indoors. They all pouted for a while in silence and I began to think my prayers had been answered,—but pretty soon Judge Fosdick started in on his baby-talk once more. It was the tenth time he told that same story in two days. Mr. Flood joined in on windmills, Mr. Tuttle on golf, and Mr. Johnson on his New England relatives. All going at once. The Judge raised his voice to a shout, so did Mr. Flood, and Mr. Tuttle, and Mr. Johnson.

The Judge was getting redder and redder in the face—and then without a word of warning he snatched a catsup bottle from the table and broke it over Mr. Flood's head. Then the fight was on. I don't know if it was the sight of the catsup or not—anyway, they all went raving mad at once, howled like hyenas, they did, sir. At first they tried to brain each other with cups and saucers and rocking chairs, and whatever was handy. I've never seen a livelier fight, sir, even at the Waiters' Club, and it was right interesting. But when they got out in the kitchen and got hold of axes, hatchets, butcher knives and such, I ran. The last thing I saw was Mr. Tuttle on the floor with Judge Fosdick on top of him, sir, cutting his throat with a can-opener, and it was very dull and made the Judge swear, sir, most horribly.

The next thing I can remember was being picked up by a lumber schooner three miles from shore, just as I was sinking for the last time. I suppose I was so scared that I had tried to swim to the mainland which was seven miles distant. That's all I know about it.

*District Attorney*—You swear this is a true and correct statement?

*Niemeyer*—Yes, sir, I do.

There is nothing I can add to Niemeyer's testimony. It covers the ground very well and leaves nothing

for conjecture, and, of course, being made under oath it is absolutely true in every detail.

There was deep gloom at the club for several days, naturally—and then Billy Duncan pointed out the silver lining.

"Boys," he said, "it's pretty sour the way the thing came out, especially about having to call all bets off, but there's one thing sure—and that is that we are finally rid of Foster T. Flood."



## Coda

*By T. F. Mitchell*

**S**HE stood before the bar, a pathetic little thing. The sympathetic eyes of the court-room were all focused upon her. Even the judge himself, moved by her wistful girlishness, paused before pronouncing sentence.

"Is there anything you would like to say?" he asked her, gently.

She turned her baby brown eyes upon him. A bit of a sob escaped her.

"No, you big stiff!" she replied.



## Bachelorium

*By Earle Phares*

**S**OMEWHERE in the world  
There is a woman  
Destined some day to become my wife.  
I know that she exists  
But I have not yet met her—  
Hurray!



**A** WOMAN always remembers the men who have kissed her. What she forgets, as she grows older, is how she made them do it.



**B**EFORE marriage a man knows nothing about his wife. After marriage conditions change. He knows less.

# Bankrupt

*By William M. Conselman*

I AM afraid there is nothing left for you, my dear. I gave away the last of my possessions a long while ago to a girl with hair like yours and pale lips and heavy eyes . . . That star over there I plucked in the past to hang as a pendant on the white throat of one of your forgotten predecessors, my dear. And I squandered all the silver of the moon buying warm kisses from one whose name I do not remember. I could give you a tune on my zither, but I have broken all its strings in playing foolish music for dancing, and my voice is cracked from singing little songs whose words made me laugh once, but fill me with melancholy now.

I am afraid there is nothing left for you . . . I cannot give you a flower, for I mind well the June night that I gathered all the roses in the world and flung them at the feet of—who was it, now? Someone whose feet were remarkably small, and whose ankles were made to twinkle in the moonlight. It does not matter . . . One wonders sometimes where they all could have gone. It puzzles me. I do not like to think about it.

You should have come sooner, before I had given everything away. There is nothing left for you now, unless—

Unless you take my heart.



# At Parting

*By Jean Allen*

I WOULD that my love could hold you fast  
As slender wire upholds great bridges;  
As the glitter of sunlight on darkling water  
Arrests and holds the reluctant eye;  
As the remembered softness of summer nights  
Loiters in the memory;  
As fragrance from a garden lingers;  
Thus would I enchain your thoughts  
When distance measures the space between.



# Open Eyes

By Gertrude Brooke Hamilton

## I

AT an incredibly tender age Eulalie was told—everything. Mrs. Blair Graze, her mother, had a modern conscience. She felt that she had been born and bred in darkness, and was grateful for the glimmers of light gleaned from certain highly polished novels on the enlightenment of the young, from warning sermons daringly intoned by her own rector—even from screen preachers, calculated to move any mother of present-day susceptibilities. So Eulalie, during an intimate hour with her mother, had life's most sacred mysteries unrolled before her infantile mind. She listened obediently. Afterwards—quite innocently—she asked her governess to give her a bath.

Her governess, Miss Vermes, considered Eulalie's mother most wise. To augment the intimate, maternal hour, Miss Vermes, awhile later, saw that Eulalie accompanied her to an illuminating series of lectures on eugenics. Lectures were a fad with Miss Vermes. During her rather protracted sojourn in the Graze household, she indulged her appetite for advanced discourses on sanitary science, heredity, hymeneal logic and kindred topics—generally seeing to it that Eulalie benefited by her palpitant garnerings!

After Miss Vermes, came a fashionable finishing school, run by the Misses Wailes, exponents of that branch of philosophy which is concerned with human morality and conduct, and stern adherents to modern ethics.

The young ladies in the Wailes seminary resembled, in a certain degree, a baskets of kittens blinking in an unmodified glare of light. Some of them—

Eulalie was not among these—had the soft-footed tread of feline instincts too early aroused, the tongues of naive serpents and the eyes of baby jungle-cats. Eulalie's chum in the basket of kittens had made up her mind to enter a nunnery and avoid men forever! Eulalie took the Wailes philosophy lightly. She was inclined to frisk and gambol, and was, on the whole, rather eager to live.

Eulalie was summarily removed from the chaperonage of the Misses Wailes in her eighteenth year, by the death of her mother. Mrs. Blair Graze passed out in the dark, dying one night, as her mother had died before her. Eulalie was now mistress of the Graze establishment on Long Island. Her father had a modern unconsciousness of her existence, being tied up with business exigencies, and beauties, of the city.

Naturally, Eulalie began to look about her. She did not care greatly for the acquaintances her mother had made—they seemed to her nice lichens clinging to trees of knowledge. She was looking for the buds and shoots from these trees! She was on the *qui vive* for conscious young cynics like herself, philosophers characterized by a gay contempt for human nature, cool materialists, adroit revelers in sentient pleasures, well-bred and highly glossed hoodlums who gave no evidence of any sort of conscience at all.

In her first freedom, Eulalie quickly ran the gamut of the heinous trifles forbidden by those who had controlled her childhood. Warned against kissing, she naturally cultivated osculation as one of the most interesting of the arts; she invited the manœuvred danger-fraught seconds, learning to handle, taunt and tempt the opposite sex.

Everything about Eulalie was either provocative or inquisitive. Her eyebrows stamped the small oval of her face with a question mark. Her mouth, with its twisted smile, young modeling and always cleverly applied rouge, could be both sinful and simple. Her soot-coloured, oblong eyes, her disdainful nostrils, her pointed chin, the curves of her slight little body, each had their shadowy suggestion, their silken, inquisitive naughtiness. In the matter of dress, having been instructed in the vibration of colours and their effect on the senses, Eulalie seldom wore white. Having been initiated into the lore of perfumes and the emotions they roused or lulled, she sought out a modish laboratory, interviewed its perfume specialist, and had her personality expressed in a scent peculiarly effective—a flick of lilac and a flick of ylang-ylang.

The men Eulalie met soon bored her. They were, she felt, a basket of pups, happy-go-lucky, tumbling creatures with clumsy, harmless paws and yaps far worse than their bites.

By the end of her first season, Eulalie was an unhappy little wretch, sulky and satiated.

No one knew less than Eulalie why meeting Gregg Benton at a dinner-party one evening precipitated her out of the sulks and piqued her interest. Though attractive, he was not an Adonis. Though eligible, he was not possessed of millions. Yet he instantly aroused her. The very timbre of his voice seemed to promise a new twist to the man-and-woman jig.

Throughout the courses of the meal, their eyes met more than once.

Benton sought her in the drawing-room, after dinner.

"There's a cereus in flower somewhere in the conservatories," he said to her. "Shall we hunt it up?"

She employed the usual monosyllable. "Yes."

Yet she rose with a swiftness of movement. In walking with him, she realized that his manner held just the right amount of zest, of humour, of

anticipation—for the jig-saw of flirtation.

She was conscious of his likable height, of a profile cast in bronze tints, hair that might be nice to rumple and a chin whose incongruous dimple might fit her finger-tip. She was, also, cognizant of her own reflection in the mirrors they passed; a dazzling little figure in a sleeveless, one-piece frock of rose velvet with shoulder straps of iridiscent that glimmered again about her hips and ankles.

He caught her glance, in one of the mirrors.

"I don't blame you for loving yourself," he laughed, aware of her vanity.

One of her shoulders lifted and fell.

She turned the drift of his words.

"Do you believe in love?"

"Do you?" he smiled.

"Does anyone?"

"Of course not."

"Of course not! So let's fall in love with each other."

He laughed, and made a quick scrutiny of her. "All right. What's the first move?"

"To believe."

"In what?"

"Why—in love." She snapped her fingers, measuring him with a glance wherein lurked enticing mockery.

He caught her glance, giving her a bolder one, in return. "The first move seems easy enough," quizzingly. "What next?"

She was silent; moving through the greenery with her seasoned eyes of eighteen dropping. Neither the tinkle and drip of a fountain nor the sweep of fragrance from a nook particularly odorous lifted her lashes, it was as if she were contemplating the second move, extracting the honey from it and examining the poison.

Benton watched her. The clustering foliage cast lights and shadows on her face; now, etching its fresh tints and exquisite modeling, now, making a scarlet blotch of the mouth and two sooty lines of the lashes.

By chance, they approached the

night-blooming cereus they had come to see—a flower resembling a woman in a resplendent mood, milk-white as a woman preened for conquest, prodigal as a woman in some nocturnal hour.

"It's a beauty!" he ejaculated, halting.

"Isn't it?" she answered, beside him.

Her breath lengthened over a flower that blossomed infrequently and then at night—the sight, shaking her slight breast with a breath delicately desirous, lent her an air of passing sweetness, of transient languor. Suddenly, her lashes fluttered up and her face tilted to him; the eyes like slits of night against the luminous pallor of her skin.

Benton took the time to study her features at close range, before he kissed her.

## II

EULALIE jigged into this new flirtation with every provocative, inquisitive instinct. She saw much of Gregg Benton. Outwardly, the flirtation in no way deviated from a normal course; beginning with the ordinary introduction, it described a cycle of matinées, teas, dances, chance and premeditated meetings, spans of indifferences and spells of exhilaration. The people of their set began to couple their names; gossip foretold the merging of the Graze and Benton fortunes, raked over the scandals of the relative families, and complacently awaited the natural dénouement of the affair.

Inwardly, Eulalie was merely bent on subjecting a young man who, no matter how heady the moment, seemed always able to hold her off for a brief, quixotic scrutiny; in the past, she had taken the prerogative of analysis and delay to herself. Eulalie was not primarily a husband-catcher. But she was a man-hunter, with a keen scent for the chase. It was amusing to find herself under eyes that sought to read her—and to work for the blind occasion where there might be no hesitation on his part, only a delirious, uncaring abandon that would call for ultra-

skillful handling on her part and evasions more adroit than she had yet brought into play.

On a day of intermittent sunshine and high winds, Eulalie hailed Benton on Fifth Avenue—she was at the wheel of her roadster; giddy as the weather in a chic plush turban sporting a yellow devil's-horn and a plush cape lined with amber brocade.

She ran her roadster to the curb—he was a-foot.

"Good-morning," she said, gaily.

"A very good morning!" he emphasized, over-joyed to see her.

"Where are you going?" she asked, rather as if she had the right to question him.

"To the business of the day," he said, laughing.

"To Wall Street?—in such weather?"

She unlatched the door of her car. "Come along with me wherever I'm going," saucily. "Let's make a day of it."

He was bareheaded in the wind, dark locks blowing up from his forehead.

"Be good, and ride on," he told her. "You can be tempting!"

She wheeled him, with a slang that might have seemed dubious on lips less cleverly rouged.

"C'mon, let's double-cross your Wall Street. This don't-care wind—C'mon!"

"If you put it like that—" He opened the door of the roadster, and stepped in.

She shrugged. "Leave it to the jargon of the streets to lure a man!"

Her blowing devil's-horn and jaunty cape made her appear rather piquant, in a wind that set her eyes sparkling like mica.

She drove easily and well; veering West at Forty-second Street.

"Where's the wind taking us?" he inquired, settling comfortably in his seat; stretching his long legs and planting his hat more firmly.

"Have you ever lunched in Whippypany?" she counter-questioned.

"Never heard of it."

"Where is it?"

"In Jersey, beyond the Oranges—hardly more than a crooked thoroughfare and some criss-cross byways; half-frozen chickens that squawk, dogs that look flea-bitten; roads tolerable, scenery unnoticeable."

"Why Whippany?" He watched the way she handled the steering-wheel.

"The word came into my head—may be the wind blew it in. I dined in Whippany once, when we had a blow-out."

"*We?*" He made an ironical gesture, half sighing. "Every wind that blows has blown before!"

She nodded. "Hasn't there ever flown across your mind a name like Whippany?"

"Of course," imperturbably. "You remember a poorly cooked meal, a *tête-a-tête*—"

"A particularly atrocious salad, spots on table napery, something somebody said to help the poor meal along—"

"Whippany! What queer things people remember!"

They crossed the Weehawken Ferry. The river was mud-coloured, topped by white crests. The wind smelled of tar and many things.

From the ferry-landing, Eulalie took an upgrade to the Hudson County Boulevard—they talked of roads and inns, recalled comical motor incidents, discussed the different parts of the country. Their route had the average landmarks; trolley intersections, cemeteries, bridges, forks, service depots, golf grounds, post offices and monuments. The long run on the Valley Road put a keen edge to their appetites, and they were ready for any sort of luncheon by the time they reached the road-sign that led into Whippany.

"The place where we dined," said Eulalie, pointing out a blackened foundation and solitary chimney on the crooked thoroughfare, "seems to have gone up in smoke!"

He surveyed the charred remains of an inn. "It's never safe to re-tour a spot of chance romance. Better seek

verdant places." Dryly, "I should have warned you against such reconnoitering."

"Warnings," she retorted, "are futile. The only places they seem to fit are railroad crossings."

"Give me the wheel," he said. "Change places with me and enjoy a cigarette—while I find somewhere to eat."

She complied; fishing her cigarette-case from an inner pocket of her cape, lighting one for him and one for herself.

She glanced at his hand on the wheel.

Making herself comfortable and stretching her limbs, "Where's the wind taking us, now?"

He reversed the car at a fork of the road.

"Have you ever lunched in McClouds?"

She was reflective. "We passed the village of McClouds on our way here, straight downgrade—"

"In McClouds, on the edge of the Oranges," he said, "there are half-frozen chickens that squawk, dogs that look flea-bitten; and there's an inn that serves a poorly cooked meal—if it hasn't burned down, or blown out." He increased the speed, without looking at her.

"What queer places people remember!" she ruminated, smoking her cigarette.

The roadster made the run back to McClouds—to an inn whose shutters rattled in the wind, a tumble-down edifice set obliquely on a hill.

Eulalie stepped from the machine, giving herself the luxury of a stretch and a grimace.

"Somebody usually says something to help the poor meals along," he reminded her, as they started up the rickety steps of the hillside hostelry.

"Don't depend on me for helpful repartee," she told him. "My inn was burned out. You saw it, in all its ruin. I shan't soon forgive you."

She halted on the precipitate steps.

"Do a favour for me—go back to the car and bring me the joke-book you'll find under the cushions. It will help us over the meal."

They lunched at a table whose floral decoration consisted of some dusty immortals in a Chinese jar. Their host was a fatty man, reduced to a state of dejection by the advent of two guests in an off season; he assured them that, in the season, his cuisine afforded the best of everything for discriminating tourists; his menu to-day consisted of hot sausages, baked yams, fruit muffins and coffee.

Over the coffee-cups, Eulalie opened her joke-book, one of those naïvely bound pamphlets sometimes found under the cushions of surprisingly nice-appearing cars—a virgin in the Misses Wailes' finishing school had introduced Eulalie to this form of entertainment, one midnight.

She delicately jiggled the crisp pages, eyes down, mouth mischievous. She had taken off her cape. In a lustre frock of amber satin, whose over-tunic and loose, smart waist were banded with fringe insertion the colour of her devil's-horn, with a strand of beryls dripping to her hips, she was a vivid product of her mother's conscience, her governess and her finishing school. Easily as a maiden of olden times might have read lilting rondelays to her lover, she entertained Benton with several stories whose points were "hot," to put it mildly.

In the middle of reading to him, she closed the book and tossed it away. "Stuff; isn't it?"

He had laughed at the stories, as a man laughs at a sophisticated child.

Now, he said, over the coffee-cups: "That's a bad little book for a good little girl to have. Who gave it to you? Not, I hope, the 'he' who dined with you in Whippany."

She was lighting an after-luncheon weed, daintily clicking the match alight with her finger-nail. "I pur-

chased it. In a modest book shop."

Her eyes met his; and she laughed.

She rose, and strolled to one of the windows; standing there with her back to him and in a spiral of thin smoke rising over her shoulder.

Watching the bare limbs of trees jig in the wind, there drifted across her face a touch of self-contempt, a cloud of introspection bordering on moodiness. A smile that curled her mouth and narrowed her eyes chased this expression away.

She half turned toward him, a shoulder propped against the window-sash, cigarette dripping indolently from her fingers.

Her idle, measuring glance seemed to ask, "What now?"

He came to her, smiling. His hands reached for her shoulders, turning her about until they were face to face; and he was able to make a critical examination of her features in the bleak light from the window.

Insolently, impudently, her all but flawless countenance invited his inspection.

His hands were inclined to follow the curves of her shoulders—

She slipped from under his touch.

She made an impulsive detour of the room; laughing at a picture in oils of a clumsy naiad gamboling amid pondweeds, winking into the glass eyes of a stuffed vulture, glancing into a wall-mirror, and coming upon an old horn graphophone, with a croon of delight: "C'mon, let's dance!"

Gleefully, she turned the crank, adjusted the horn, touched the lever and applied the needle—swaying like a little rowdy to the crude, uncaring rhythm that blared into her face, she held out her arms to him.

Eulalie could dance! To-day, she might have been of Hottentot origin, or a houri of the streets, as she trod the rough floor in his arms; around the table still cluttered with the meal, around the ornate, shoddy chairs, by the windows where the shutters were

banging in the wind, to the jangling, riotous music from the brass horn. She burrowed her head on his shoulder and her face came up framed in loose curls—the bit of ungrooming changed her, modifying each refinement and exploiting each allurement.

The wheeze died stridently in the throat of the horn, and near the windows he flung her back in his arms to scan her with her hair falling—he laughed at her, holding her so.

"Naughty girl!" he said, and released her with a mock violence that sent her reeling.

She recovered her equilibrium lightly, hands at her hair as she leaned, breathless, against the table. She regarded him, biting her lip.

Outside, the wind was rising.

A sudden gust heaved a shutter from its hinges, clattering it into a gutter.

"There's a storm coming," she said, twisting up her hair.

He crossed the room for her cape. "Yes. . We'd better get back. Or shall we stay here until it's over?"

"Let's race it." She was slipping into her wraps, dipping into amber-lined pockets for her gloves. At the mirror, she used lip-stick and powder-puff tellingly. She fitted her fingers into the gloves.

Benton summoned the innkeeper and settled for the meal. The sky was growing blacker, the gleams of sunlight had gone.

"We'll be caught," he cautioned her, as they went down the steps to her roadster.

She let him put up the hood and take the wheel, while she adjusted the wind-shield.

"It's going to be a corker!" she said, of the storm.

"It's going to catch us," he reiterated, watching her.

"Race it," she dictated, briefly.

He took her at her word and for the next few minutes the wind howled in their mouths and ears.

"Had enough?" he finally laughed, conceding to the speed laws.

Her eyes slid around to him, mirthfully. "Enough?" she drawled, with questioning lips.

"Be good," he admonished; refusing to kiss her on the lonely Valley Road. "We mustn't philander in this tempest."

He gave his attention to the wheel.

### III

THE storm was beginning; drives of wind and drives of rain. The hills were blurred. She bent forward to use the wind-shield cleaner with a deft twist of her fingers. At one of the turnings in the road, they passed a boy and a girl running hand-in-hand from the storm; the girl was afraid, clinging to the hand guiding her—they had a fleet glimpse of an innocent, startled face, eyes blind in the rain, mouth palpitant, nostrils wide, colour tumultuous. Eulalie rendered homage to this chance picture of undefiled youth by taking out her vanity mirror, toning down the colour of her lips with a thoughtful finger, readjusting each feature of her face; and turning on her companion a countenance luminous in its naïveté, its startled dreaminess its virginal affright.

A second later, she was volatile, sighing,

"Give me your lips to kiss,  
My heart's a feather;  
Ah, methinks life is this—  
Love, and wild weather!"

The storm was upon them; intermingling drives of rain and wind. There was no sign of life along the road. The trees seemed jiggling in the gales. Freshets blew under the hood of the car. The storm was over them, under them, about them; water beating in on them, wind enclosing them; the long, deserted road where the boy and girl had been running

the crude, uncaring rhythm of nature in abandon.

The roadster came to a halt. He kissed her. . . . Eulalie found herself cowering, with her hand outflung.

. . . . He was driving again, hard.

She was inclined to whimper to herself, at first. He had not kissed her like this before. There had been no scrutiny, no flushed laughter. He had simply drawn all he pleased from her lips, and put her away. She was rendered un-clever by the caress; it slackened her wits—while it tore her with the light rage of comprehension. She was mute, pliable, compliant. She longed to creep, bedraggled, close to him, for another kiss—like that. He was the man she had been waiting for, the cool, cynical hood-lum! She yearned to feel his arms about her and fight off any release, to drown in a storm of his kisses.

Stealing a glance at his profile, she cuddled in her seat, breathing unevenly.

She became acutely conscious of him, forgetful for the nonce of herself. A warm sort of drowsiness stole through her blood, while there flickered through her consciousness waves of something akin to regret, shame, humiliation and prayer.

Her small, wary face betrayed a new expression, moisture glimmering on the lashes, pallor sweeping the cheeks, tremours touching the mouth. There came over her mind and over her a sensation that she did not understand— Though Eulalie had been conscientiously instructed in sexology, Mrs. Blair Graze had told her child nothing of love; Miss Vermes had attended no lectures on the immortal passion; the Misses Wailes had not employed Cupid as a teacher in their seminary.

The trip in the storm was a silent one.

Wind and water everywhere; scurrying pedestrians; swelling rivers; wet macadam and concrete; the cold

and sheltered sweeps of Long Island—the motor-porch of her home.

"Come have tea," she said to him.

"Thanks, I will." He followed her in.

While the storm ran down, Eulalie poured Benton tea and passed him cake in front of the usual log fire. Her mood was hard to define. One minute, she served him with tender hands and tenderer glances. The next minute, she held him off with raillery brittle as it was insincere. His mood matched hers. One minute, he was serving her. The next, he was holding her off. The half hour passed without amorous avowals.

He rose to go.

"We've had our sassy day together," he said smiling. "What next?"

Her shoulders suggested a shrug. "What now?"

"I believe—" he began.

"Do you?" ironically.

She moved further from him, with a dawdle in her step.

He held out his arms to her.

"Come on," he laughed.

She shook her head, moving to the fire-fender.

"All right," he said, philosophical. But his hands reached for her again, came groping for her.

She eyed him, with her twisted smile of eighteen.

With the firelight on her hair and face, she held up her betrothal hand.

"I suppose, you're going to ask me to marry you," she said.

His reply came quickly.

"Do you wish me to?"

She sank into a chair, lolled in it with her rather inimitable grace and fleeting impression of laxity; looking up at him.

"Come back this evening," she suggested. "For your answer."

"All right." His philosophy sustained him.

She reached for her cigarette-case, igniting a match with the clip of her finger-nail. Smoking, she was non-

chalantly conscious of the somewhat deliberate survey he made of her; she even returned the curious look that took stock of loosened hair, sooty eyes, red mouth, waxen chin, girlish hands, curving waist and insolent length of ankle.

"*Au revoir, till we kiss again,*" she murmured.

Benton laughed.

"Good-bye till then, nocturnal bloom."

He gave her a farewell look, and left.

#### IV

SHE listened to his quick footsteps and the closing of the front door.

Tossing her cigarette into the fire. She drew a slow breath that held her quiescent and brought waves of unaccustomed colour to her face. Her eyes closed. She buried her head between her knees, arms outstretched, fingers interlacing— Giving herself up to thoughts of him, hers was the delirious, uncaring abandon. The quality of these emotions told her that her time had come!

In her enlightened, modern young soul, she cogitated. Her sense of delirium gave place to a sane calosity. Reaching for another cigarette, she began to ask herself questions. What did she know of Gregg Benton? What was he like? What were his vices and his virtues?—had he a clean bill of health? Smoking furiously—he was decent enough looking, but could one tell?— The cigarette lagged in her fingers. Her eyes fled to a mirror.

Eulalie's father came in, while she was sitting there. She looked at him from under her shadowy lashes. Her mother had told her something of her father, and the beauties of town; the Misses Wailes had invested all men with an insatiable thirst for beauty; Miss Vermes had had a third cousin whose husband— Nonsensical whisperings! She had taken them

lightly, but they still echoed in her ears.

She rose, and went up to her own quarters. There, she did some more thinking. Did she care to marry a man whose will was stronger than hers? Would she not be swept up by Benton, swallowed—devastated? Hadn't she been instructed to hold the whip-hand? Wasn't self-preservation impossible, if one cared too much? In view of the dangers and responsibilities involved, was such a matrimonial flight worth the taking?

Old stories, lectures and pictures were thrown again on the screen of Eulalie's mind. She saw herself a very little creature obediently hearkening to her mother, trotting along with her hand in Miss Vermes', frisking from under the ethics advocated by the Misses Wailes; taking all of them frivolously, yet being molded by them—

She thought of love, in an abstract way; it was said that love was blind, if so, what chance had she, who, before she came to the loving age, had been made to see?—she had heard that love was grounded on respect—not for her the glamour and romance that invests a man with godhood and finds ashes of roses in the gradual, natural disillusionment—

If she went down to Benton to-night, there could be no dalliance, no adroit withdrawals. A storm! his kiss! She had been helpless. If she went down to him to-night, she would promise to marry him.

Eulalie contemplated putting out her finger and pressing an electric button; telling a servant that she would not be at home that evening to anyone. But she didn't. She sought her dressing-room, and tubbed—her lethargy vanished before a fanfare of physical well-being.

In her boudoir, she brushed and re-piled her hair. The frock she chose was a trifle of net and silver cloth hung with garlands of rosebuds; she looked into and closed her jewel-case,

barely tipped her perfume decanter, and wielded her clever lip-stick very lightly. She went down the stairs, looking her best.

Eulalie dined. Her father had come and gone, in his habitual fashion.

After dinner, she prowled the lower part of the house, clicked on a light here and clicked off a light there; saw by the mirrors that she was milk-white, resplendent, and, with a little laugh, flung herself on a divan.

Nestling among cushions of silken weave, she waited for Gregg Benton.

She appeared very delectable, with her feet tucked under her silver skirt, her shoulders and arms shrouded in flowing net and her slight bust confined by a silver girdle. Her thoughts were honeyed. When Benton came tonight, she would be sweet as the girl they had passed on the Valley Road; she would coo to him; the face she tilted would appear shy, suffused—And she would promise to marry him Nested in the downy cushions, her lashes swept her cheeks, a smile played on her mouth, her breath came and went, softly.

An hour passed. Two. Three!

She sat up and put her chin on her

knees. It became apparent to her that Gregg Benton was not coming. And—as he was not coming—he did not wish to marry her! Why? Her eyes narrowed.

She indulged in conjectures, submitting herself to as quizzing a scrutiny as Benton had ever given her and analyzing her failure to ensnare this man who hadn't bored her to satiety: It might be that she had been too easy. Or it might be—Her conjectures were made levelly: Perhaps, a man would rather tell than listen to ticklish anecdotes. May be, if there was immoderate dancing, he preferred damsels he didn't care a damn for. Possibly, he had envied the boy in the storm whose girl was obviously untrained and untaught! Very possibly, he had had enough of Eulalie, in the storm. She took her chin from her knees to hurl a cushion the length of the room, venting a fury of futility in a purposeless throw and play of muscle; while her eyes were, in turn, derisive, contentious, jeering, tragic, raging—fagged.

Eulalie concluded that Benton had not come because he had little to teach her—or to take from her!

Which was true enough.



## No Compensation

*By Harry Kemp*

SING if you will of aging  
And the great peace that comes  
When pulses go no longer  
Like men that march with drums:

Though all life's ache and tumult  
Die out from heart and brain,  
Age brings no compensation  
For loss of Youth's sweet pain.

# The American Scene

*By Carroll H. Frey*

1

**PHILADELPHIAN:** One who has heard of New York.

2

**BOSTONIAN:** One who has read of New York and Philadelphia.

3

**CHICAGOAN:** One who has been to New York, Philadelphia and Boston.

4

**WESTERNER:** One who loudly announces that he has heard of, read of, and been to New York, Philadelphia, Boston and Chicago, and that he doesn't give a damn.

5

**FOREIGNER:** One who wonders what it's all about.



# The Surprise

*By Dennison Varr*

**H**E took a long chance, it is true, but he was confident. He gathered together a clergyman, two witnesses and a marriage license and arrived at her home. Of course, when he announced his purpose she was stupefied. She was never more surprised, in fact, in her life. She hastened upstairs to don the wedding dress she had made two months before.



**H**APPINESS is the few moments between meeting a girl and meeting her mother.

# Repetition Generale

By H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan

## § 1

THE SECOND CHOICE.—The common theory that a woman who marries her second choice is more or less a creature for pity is as hollow as most theories cherished by the great yokelry. Not only is the woman not to be pitied; she is rather to be envied and congratulated. A woman's first choice—the man closest to her heart and the one who, had the Fates been kind, she would have gained for mate—is generally a man much less suited to the profession of husband than the temporarily spurned fellow in whom—as second choice—she eventually seeks solace. The first choice is more often than not a gaudy Romeo, good-looking, fun-loving, engaging, witty—but without the substantial qualities possessed by the second choice. These substantial qualities, in the youthful game of romance and amour, do not appeal to the woman: they seem commonplace and unattractive to her as against the easy flash and graceful glitter of her other love. But they are the qualities that make a husband if not a lover. And, having married them, as the years pass by and romance dies out of the world the woman achieves a peace, a contentment and a happiness that her first choice, had she married it, would never have given her. A woman's first choice belongs not to her maturer years; it belongs to that green and sunlit period of her life when all the world sings a wonderful music, and the clouds are made of cotton. It is for youth, and passion, and gay colours, and the moon. The second choice, the sounder choice, is for the later years when the rain begins to fall. It is the

choice for home, for comfort, and for grateful peace.

## § 2

*Postscript.*—One of the errors that women constantly make is that of over-estimating the potency of romantic love as a masculine motive. They are fond of the delusion that every man strives and struggles in the world in order to cast a rich loot at the feet of some woman. One often hears them poll-parrot the ancient bosh that Wagner wrote the Ring to please Cosima and that Napoleon conquered Italy in order to appear heroic in the eyes of Josephine. It would be difficult to imagine anything less generally true. If all the women in the world were hanged tomorrow, nine-tenths of the men would be at their customary strug-glings and stealings the day after. The Stock Exchange would remain open. All business houses would be booking orders. The courts would continue their endless adjudications between thief and thief. Only actors and clergymen would stop work.

Men let women think as they do simply because it pleases the women and does no harm. Moreover, they esteem the talents of women as *claqueurs*—or is it *claqueuses*? Every woman (disregarding gender for the moment) is a natural *rigolard*, *chatolilleur*, *pleureur* and *bisseur*. When a man has done anything in this world, however puerile, he wants to boast about it—and other men will seldom listen to him. So he goes to women. They lift their eyebrows, catch their breaths and say “Ah!” Very often a man finds this appreciation so grateful that he decides

to employ a woman to lavish it upon him regularly. This woman, if the arrangement is legalized, is called a wife.

### § 3

*Innocence and the Young Woman.*—The young woman most attractive to men is not, as is claimed, the completely innocent young woman, but the young woman who, though anything but completely innocent, still looks as if she were completely innocent. The completely innocent young woman—granting that there still exists such an animal—is approximately as interesting to a man as a Sunday School. It is the Encyclopedia Britannica dressed in baby blue with eyes downcast and a hurt mouth who grabs us as sure as there's a hell!

### § 4

*Confession of a Theological Moron.*—One of my heaviest handicaps in this world is the fact that I am absolutely devoid of what is called religious feeling. That is to say, I have no sense whatever of the divine presence or of a divine personality; neither ever enters into my thinking. I have faced, in my time, all the great disasters that man must suffer—professional failure, financial catastrophe, social ignominy, the treachery of friends, the loss of a best girl, intolerable physical pain, even the threat of death itself. Yet I cannot remember that even in the blackest moments of long and ghastly nights have I ever had the slightest impulse to pray to God for help. Twice I have been shot at, deliberately and at short range. Both times I was scared stiff, and yet neither time did it occur to me to ask any aid of the celestial hierarchy. As for the impulse to worship, it is as foreign to my nature as the impulse to run for Congress.

I am anything but a militant atheist and haven't the slightest objection to church-going, so long as it is honest. I have gone to church myself many

times, honestly seeking to experience the great inward exaltation that religious persons speak of. Not even at St. Peter's in Rome have I sensed the least trace of it. The most I ever feel at the most solemn moment of the most pretentious religious ceremonial is a sensuous delight in the beauty of it—a delight exactly like that which comes over me when I hear, say, "Tristan and Isolde" or Brahms' stupendous fourth symphony. The effect of such music, in fact, is much keener than the effect of the liturgy. Brahms moves me far more powerfully than the holy saints.

As I say, this deficiency is a handicap in a world peopled, in the overwhelming main, by men who are inherently religious. It sets me apart from my fellows and makes it difficult for me to understand many of their ideas and not a few of their acts. I see them responding constantly and robustly to impulses that to me are quite inexplicable. Worse, it causes these folks to misunderstand me, and often to do me serious injustice. They cannot rid themselves of the notion that, because I am anesthetic to the ideas which move them most profoundly, I am, in some vague but nevertheless certain way, a man of aberrant morals, and hence one to be kept at a distance. I have never met a religious man who did not reveal this suspicion. No matter how earnestly he tried to grasp my point of view, he always ended by making an alarmed sort of retreat. All religions, in fact, teach that dissent is a sin; most of them make it the blackest of all sins, and all of them punish it severely whenever they have the power. It is impossible for a religious man to rid himself of the notion that such punishments are just. He simply cannot imagine a civilized rule of conduct that is not based upon the fear of God.

Let me add that my failing is in the fundamental religious impulse, not in mere theological credulity. I am not kept out of the church by an inability to believe the current dogmas. In

point of fact, a good many of them seem to me to be reasonable enough, and I probably dissent from most of them a good deal less violently than many men who are assiduous devotees. Among my curious experiences, years ago, was that of convincing an ardent Catholic who balked at the dogma of papal infallibility. He was a very faithful son of the church and his inability to accept it greatly distressed him. I proved to him, at least to his satisfaction, that there was nothing intrinsically absurd in it—that if the dogmas that he already accepted were true then this one was probably true also. Some time later, when this man was on his death-bed, I visited him and he thanked me simply and with apparent sincerity for resolving his old doubt. But even he was unable to comprehend my own lack of religion. His last words to me were a pious hope that I would give over my lamentable contumacy to God and lead a better life. He died firmly convinced that I was headed for hell, and, what is more, that I deserved it.

## § 5

*Boreo Magnificus.*—Of all bores, the pie-winner is the successful man who affects an elaborate modesty. His heavy effort at ingratiating self-discount and detraction is of a piece with a woman's effort to divert the male eye from her own anatomical shortcomings by criticizing similar shortcomings in some other woman. And each stratagem is of equally absurd avail. The successful man who professes a humility and a surprise at other men's flattering estimate of him is generally—if you track down his past—a man cheaply born. The man who is not conscious of his success in the world, and consciously proud of it, and amiably contemptuous of his rivals who have failed, is a bounder in his heart. The aristocrat, whether of blood, or trade, or art, is an aristocrat because he knows he is one.

## § 6

*American Fiction.*—One of the intrinsic defects of American fiction lies in this fact: that it habitually shows an inferior man yielding discreetly to his environment and so achieving what, under a third-rate civilization, is commonly called success. Here we have the typically American, the optimistic, the inspirational, the *Saturday Evening Post* school. In character creation its masterpiece is the shoe-drummer who, by thinking of some new and idiotic advertising dodge, outsells all other shoe-drummers, marries the daughter of the owner of the shoe-factory, and ends by owning it himself. Optimism? Yes. But what a world it would be if all men were optimists of that sort!

The drama underlying such fiction is false drama, Sunday-school drama. It is the kind of drama that awakens a response only in men who are essentially unimaginative, timorous and fifth-rate,—in brief, in democrats, "good" men, Christian "gentlemen." The man of greater intellectual resources takes no interest in the conflicts it deals with. He doesn't want to marry the daughter of the owner of a shoe-factory, and would probably burn down the shoe-factory itself if it ever fell into his hands. What interests this man is the far more thrilling and poignant conflict between some man of his own sort and the harsh, meaningless flats of destiny, the unintelligible mandates and vagaries of God. His hero is one who resists these mandates and vagaries—and fails.

Most such conflicts, of course, make themselves felt internally. A civilized man's normal conflict is not with exterior lions, trusts, margraves, policemen, rivals in love, German spies and tornadoes, but with the obscure, atavistic impulses within him—the impulses, weaknesses and limitations that war with his notion of what his life should be in this world. Nine times out of ten he succumbs. Nine times out of ten he must yield to the

dead hand. Nine times out of ten his aspiration is almost infinitely above his achievement. The result is that we see him sliding down-hill—his ideals breaking up, his hope petering out, his character in decay. Character in decay is thus the throne of the great bulk of superior fiction. One has it in Dostoievsky, in Balzac, in Hardy, in Conrad, in Flaubert, in Zola, in Turgenieff, in Sudermann, in Bennett, and, to come home, in Drieser. In nearly all first-rate novels the hero is defeated. In perhaps a majority he is completely destroyed.

The hero of the inferior—*i. e.*, the typically American—novel engages in no such doomed and fateful combat. His conflict is not with the inexplicable ukases of destiny, the limitations of his own strength, the dead hand upon him, but simply with the superficial desires of his fellow men. He thus has a fair chance of winning—and in bad fiction that chance is always converted into a certainty. Thus he marries the daughter of the owner of the shoe-factory and eventually gobbles the factory itself. His success gives thrills to persons who can imagine no higher aspiration. He embodies their optimism, as the other hero embodies the pessimism of more reflective and idealistic men. He is the protagonist of that great majority which is so inferior that it is quite unconscious of its inferiority.

### § 7

*Marriage and the Man.*—Marriage defeats and humbles the man since it soon or late robs him of his greatest bulwark, *viz.*, vanity. The man who is no longer vain is a man already beaten. The man who is no longer proud of himself, who is no longer possessed of a pretty, healthy conceit, is a man slipping into the living grave. The vanity so essential to his happiness and well-being, marriage takes from him. However great his success in material things, marriage, like the steady dropping of water, gradually wears down his antecedent self-pride and self-glory. The

married man is the man whom romance has vanquished. He is a Cornwallis at Yorktown. He is the corpse of a bachelor.

### § 8

*When the Lid Lifts.*—Men who, on idealistic grounds, denounce all autocracies as evil are forgetful of the good they serve by suppressing (maybe with regrettable violence, but usually quite effectively) the natural hatred of all inferior men for their superiors—a hatred constantly fermenting in the mob, and as constantly offering a menace to all civilized order, security and human dignity. How powerful and ruthless it is is demonstrated whenever the autocracy holding it in check is suddenly destroyed or crippled, say by such phenomena as the French and Russian revolutions. Immediately such a catastrophe liberates the mob it begins to make war to the death upon every form of superiority—not only upon that kind which attaches to autocracy itself, but also to many kinds that are actually in opposition to autocracy. The day after a successful revolution is a blue day for the late autocrat, but it is also a blue day for any man who has stood in noticeable opposition to the fears, superstitions and prejudices of the mob in any other way, say by attacking the prevailing religious rumble-bumble, or by refusing to engage in sordid industry, or by wearing clothes that are disapproved by the majority of green-grocers and street-car conductors.

### § 9

*From the New York Telephone Directory.*—

American Institute of Arts and Letters,  
347 Madison Ave.. Vand'r'b'l't 5518  
American Institute of Lead Manufacturers, 90 West St....Rector 5157

### § 10

*The Tiring Business Man.*—The business man, the man in trade, is the tiresome fellow he ten times in ten is,

not because he persists in talking shop, but precisely because he persists in not talking shop. Any man's business, if he thoroughly understands it, is always interesting. But the business man, instead of talking about the one thing he knows, a thing that would engage the attention and hold the interest of his hearer, insists upon talking of art, music, letters, the theater, women—of everything about which he knows nothing. Such conversation he believes to be expected of him in the social circle wherein he moves: otherwise, he imagines, he will be held a gross and loutish fellow. The result is the familiar result: one runs a mile immediately one sees a business man heave into sight. But let the business man talk about the manner in which he runs his great banking house, or the manner in which he built up a one-hundred thousand dollar business from some down-at-the-heel yokel store, or the manner in which he arrived at the successful way to persuade the public to use his can-opener and no other, and one would stand his ground fascinated. The business man who talks about Arno Holz's influence on Hauptmann is as interesting as the poet who talks about the 1918 sales of Coca-Cola.

### § 11

*The Social Compact.*—The security of human society is based upon mutual confidence—upon the reasonable expectation that every man will act in such-and-such a way in such-and-such a situation. Take away this confidence and the whole structure goes to pieces. War takes it away and revolution takes it away. The appalling phenomena that they present are due almost entirely to the destruction of confidence, *i. e.*, to the fact that they cause men to act in new ways, not readily to be foreseen and prepared for. All war is based upon surprises. And all revolution is based upon the abolition of old inhibitions.

It is possible to have confidence in two sorts of men: (a) the sort of man who habitually does what the law

(whether of God or of man) prescribes, and (b) the sort of man who keeps his engagements. The latter is the more reliable and hence the better citizen. What he promises to do is put into unequivocal terms and he performs it to the letter. He is what is known as the man of honour. The former is a good deal less reliable. One must always allow, in putting confidence upon him, for the fact that what the law of God or man prescribes is seldom absolutely clear. He may, in all honesty, defeat one's expectation. More likely, he will take advantage of the uncertainty to fulfill it in the way most convenient to himself. He is the moral man, the "good" man. All of us would rather trust a man of honour than a moral man. The man of honour *does* what he says he will do, regardless of the law of God or man.

### § 12

*The Mother-Woman.*—The theory that a woman loves most the kind of man she can mother vouchsafes, like the majority of blanket amorous assumptions, a number of glaring holes, and one glarer in particular. A woman does not love a man because she can mother him, she mothers him because she can love him. The man-mothering instinct is predicated wholly upon the sweetheart-mistress instinct. A woman no more cares about mothering a man whom she does not love (whether that love is complete or perhaps yet only in an incipient stage) than she cares about kissing the first street-car conductor she meets. Even the woman who takes up the profession of nursing—the professional mother—nurses most carefully, most solicitously and most eagerly that man in the ward whose hair is the smoothest and whose eyes, felt in hers, are most nearly the shade of William Faversham's.

### § 13

*The Bugaboo.*—Much of the current blabber against the late Friedrich

Wilhelm Nietzsche is grounded upon the doctrine that his capacity for consecutive thought was clearly limited. In support of the doctrine his critics cite the fact that most of his books are no more than strings of apothegms, with the subject changing on every second page. All this, it must be obvious, is fundamentally nonsensical. What deceives the professors is the traditional garrulity and prolixity of philosophers. Because the average philosophical writer, when he essays to expose his ideas, makes such copious drafts upon the parts of speech that the dictionary is almost emptied, these defective observers jump to the conclusion that his intrinsic notions are of corresponding elaborateness. This is not true. I have read Kant, Hegel, Spencer, Spinoza, Descartes, Leibnitz, Fichte, Locke, Schleiermacher, James and Bergson, not to mention the Greeks and the Romans; the more I read, the more I am convinced that it is not true.

What makes philosophy hard to read is not the complexity of the ideas set forth, but the complexity of the language in which they are concealed. The typical philosopher, having, say, four new notions, drowns them in a sea of words—all borrowed from other philosophers. One must wade through endless chapters of old stuff to get at the minute kernels of the new stuff. . . . This process Nietzsche avoided. He always assumed that his readers knew the books, and that it was thus unnecessary to rewrite them. Having an idea that seemed to him to be novel and original, he stated it in as few words as possible, and then shut down. Sometimes he got it into a hundred words; sometimes it took a thousand. But he never wrote a word too many; he never pumped up an idea to make it appear bigger than it actually was. . . . The professors are not used to that sort of writing. Nietzsche employed too few words for them—and he had too many ideas.

§ 14

*Great Moments From Rotten Plays,*

*IV.—The Great Moment from "Under the Gaslight," by Augustin Daly, author of "Leah, the Forsaken," "Griffith Gaunt," etc., etc.*

BYKE. (*Leading SNORKEY to railroad platform.*) Just sit down a minute, will you?

SNORKEY. What for? (*Laura appears horror-struck at window of station.*)

BYKE. You'll see.

SNORKEY. Well, I don't mind if I do take a seat. (*Sits down. Byke coils the rope round his legs.*) Hello! what's this?

BYKE. You'll see. (*Picks the helpless SNORKEY up.*)

SNORKEY. Byke, what are you going to do?

BYKE. Put you to bed. (*Lays him across the railroad track.*)

SNORKEY. Byke, you don't mean to—My God, you are a villain!

BYKE. (*Fastening him to rails.*) I'm going to put you to bed. You won't toss much. In less than ten minutes you'll be sound asleep. There, how do you like it? You'll get down to the Junction before me, will you? You dog me and play the eavesdropper, eh? Now do it if you can! When you hear the thunder of the wheels under your head and see the lights dancing in your eyes, and feel the iron wheels a foot from your neck, remember Byke! (*Exit L. U. E.*)

LAURA. O, Heavens! He will be murdered before my eyes! How can I aid him?

SNORKEY. Who's that?

LAURA. It is I. Do you not know my voice?

SNORKEY. That I do; but I almost thought I was dead, and it was an angel's. Where are you?

LAURA. In the station.

SNORKEY. I can't see you, but I can hear you. Listen to me, Miss, for I've got only a few minutes to live.

LAURA. (*Shaking door.*) God help me! And I cannot aid you!

SNORKEY. Never mind me, Miss. I might as well die now, and here, as at any other time. I'm not afraid. I've seen death in almost every shape, and none of them scare me; but, for the sake of those you love, I would live. Do you hear me?

LAURA. Yes! Yes!

SNORKEY. They are on the way to your cottage—Byke and Judas—to rob and murder.

LAURA. (*In agony.*) Oh, I must get out! (*Shakes window bars.*) What shall I do?

SNORKEY. Can't you burst the door?

LAURA. It is locked fast.

SNORKEY. Is there nothing in there?—no hammer—no crowbar!

LAURA. Nothing! (*Faint steam whistle heard in the distance.*) O, Heavens! The train! (*Paralyzed for an instant.*) The axe!!

SNORKEY. Cut the woodwork! Don't mind the lock—cut round it! How my neck tingles!

(A blow at door is heard.) Courage! (Another.) Courage! (The steam whistle heard again—nearer, and rumble of train on track. Another blow.) That's a true woman! Courage! (Noise of locomotive heard—with whistle. A last blow; the door swings open mutilated—the lock hanging—and LAURA appears, axe in hand.)

SNORKEY. Here—quick! (She runs and unfastens him. The locomotive lights glare on scene.) Victory! Saved! Hooray! (LAURA leans exhausted against switch.) And these are the women who ain't to have a vote!

CURTAIN

§ 15

*The Slippery Pen.*—No doubt a large part of the recent advance of what is called Liberalism—i. e., political romanticism and credulity—in the United States is due to the simple fact that the chief Liberal propagandists, on the whole, are vastly better writers than their opponents. Imagine an unbiased man putting on one side a typical Liberal pronunciamento, say by John Reed, by Max Eastman, by A. J. Nock of *The Nation*, or by one of the lyrical dreamers of *The New Republic*, and on the other side a typical Tory counterblast, say by Dr. Franklin of *The Review*, by Col. George Harvey or by the editor of the *New York Times*. Inevitably he must conclude that all of the argument is on the side of the Liberals. They not only write much better English; they write it in much better humour; they appear, at least superficially, to be far better informed and fairer men. The average reader, perhaps, is not a sound judge of literature. But it affects him just the same. Though he may not recognize it when he sees it, sound English nevertheless works its wicked will upon him.

I often wonder that the rich Tories who back the stand-pat newspapers and weeklies do not contrive to find better writers to present their case. After all, they *have* a case. More, it is often a good case—far better, in fact, than that of the Liberals, who are forever embracing bad ideas, and then abandoning them tomorrow for worse ones. I have read *The New Republic*

since it started, but I can't recall that it has ever converted me to anything—that is, anything political. On the contrary, it often makes me dislike its ideas even more than I disliked them before it stated them. None the less, I read on—and *The Nation*, *The Liberator* and the rest of the literary spell-binders therewith. Every week I encounter arguments that cry aloud to be effectively answered. But no one ever answers them effectively. No one at present in the ring seems *capable* of answering them effectively, save E. W. Howe. Imagine a stand-up debate between any of the Liberals I have mentioned and the editor of *The Times*. At the end of the first round the editor of *The Times* would be fit only to go into a bottle of alcohol as an anatomical specimen. His noblest effort, beside the everyday writing of those slick young men, appears as no more than an emission of balderdash, almost pathetic in its puerility.

In Congress there is the same story to tell. The Chief spokesmen of Conservatism—such men as Williams, Overman and Hitchcock—appear almost feeble-minded when they venture to tackle such Liberals as Borah, Johnson and La Follette. La Follette, during the first year of the war, did such ghastly execution among them that they had to hit him below the belt to get rid of him. Johnson, in a debate with Williams, takes on the aspect of a Bernard Shaw debating with a Henry Ford. The thing becomes cruel. And it is almost equally cruel on the plane of the *literati*. Can it be that all the slippery penmen have turned Bolshevik, and refuse the retainer of the Hell Hounds? Or is it that the Hell Hounds themselves are idiots, and don't know what is happening to them?

§ 16

*The Spanish.*—The modern Spaniards may be the great artistic people their enthusiastic champions assure me they are, but the lugubrious fact remains that in all their vast literature I

have thus far found only one book ("The Three Cornered Hat") that I could read with any interest and only one play ("El Gran Galeoto") that I could sit through without snoring.

They have not in the last two decades produced a single painting that has struck me as beautiful, nor a single piece of music, nor a single dish of food, nor a single woman.



## The Mysterious Address

By James Hanson

HE was a stranger in America and was unable to speak English. For fear that he would be lost he wrote, on a slip of paper, the name above the door of his lodgings.

After a stroll about town he decided to return so he accosted a pedestrian and showed him the paper.

The pedestrian, after reading the paper, glanced at him in a peculiar manner, then went upon his way.

He next stopped a policeman who also read the slip. The policeman patted him upon the shoulder and resumed his beat with a smile.

With a polite bow he exhibited his note to two girls who had just come

out of an ice cream saloon—they went on their way, giggling.

An elderly lady came next; she merely turned away haughtily after a glance at the paper in his hand.

At last in desperation he entered a drug store where several clerks were holding a whispered conversation behind the counter. Again the slip—again the roars of laughter.

Thoroughly indignant he broke into a torrent of unprintable language. One of the clerks who could speak his language, translated the words for him.

They were: "*Smoke El Ropo Cigars, Two for Five.*"



## Cortege

By Leslie Nelson Jennings

BEARING their vases, gentle-browed,  
Moving like music down the grass,  
Stately and fair, and white as cloud,  
The Grecian women pass.

From niche and fountain! . . . Ah, who knows  
What wind came crying to their sleep;  
What summons broke their long repose,  
Why happy tryst they keep!

Those whom the gods have loved are gone,  
And lips draw breath that once were stone—  
Only a little, broken faun  
Weeps out his heart, alone.

# Reductio ad Absurdum

By Edith Chapman

DELLA Price sank exhausted into a chair in one of the *Congress* drawing-rooms. Various factors had contributed to her exhaustion. The last, her abortive efforts at shopping. It was such a strain getting into and out of gowns, steeling oneself, meanwhile, to endure the veiled smiles or frankly contemptuous glances of the saleswomen as they tugged at the fastenings or searched futilely for models large enough.

After the first one or two shops she had been ready to give up. Never had there been a season of frocks adapted to such narrow lines. The world grew more insane every year. What woman wanted to look like a match?

Della's weak eyes filled with tears. Only five years ago she too had been slender and beautiful. Her fat had come so gradually that she hadn't noticed it, or been able to stop it; at least so she believed. The only way would have been to stop eating altogether, and one couldn't do that; one couldn't starve! Now it was too hopeless; the most heroic efforts brought so little result. This absence of result had been brought cruelly home to her that very morning. It was another factor contributing to her present depletion.

The forenoon she had spent with her masseuse at the hands of whom she was turkish-bathed and rubbed and pounded every other day. The incentive to this had been furnished by her husband. He had agreed to give her the leopard coat — which with a rather poignant lack of discrimination she had set her heart on — if she would lose thirty pounds. This feat, however,

seemed no nearer of realization than it had a month previous when the gauges had been set. On the scale that morning she had weighed a pound more.

The masseuse had appeared to assume no responsibility for this. "I can't really help you, Mrs. Price, except temporarily; no one can; unless you will consent to diet."

Della had scowled with disappointed vexation. It was so unfair. Three weeks back this woman had agreed to perform the miracle unaided; when she had subscribed for her course of treatment there had been no mention of diet; the other then had been sanguine enough; and now the responsibility was to be shifted back to her.

"What do you mean by diet," she had retorted petulantly. "Skip some of my meals?"

"Not that, but omit certain food entirely; all starches and sugars particularly," the other had answered her stiffly in a cold, almost contemptuous voice.

Against the tone as much as the words she had made the wry face of a child.

"What would there be left to eat? I hate meat; and I like salads only for the mayonnaise."

"Ah, you see!"

The contempt was no longer at any pains to hide itself. They were all leagued against her. The whole world was leagued together to sneer at her and patronize her. She felt the dumb rage choke her at the very memory of that tone.

The tone combined with the injustice of the other's sudden desertion of her had been too much.

"But surely, you guaranteed to reduce me by this pounding and massaging. I thought these hot baths counted for something too. Do you admit that you can't do anything, after all?"

The other had nodded stoically.

"Not a thing, unless you will agree to help me. Each time you come here I can take off a pound or two, but it will always be the same pound. For unless you diet you'll go right out and gain it back again at the next meal."

She had left the woman, too despondent to be any longer resentful. It was the same story everywhere. Diet! And that she couldn't do. She had tried it, and she couldn't. The very smell of food made her so ravenously hungry these days. And she didn't seem to have the strength to resist; she supposed she had become obese, mentally as well as physically.

Moreover, eating was one of the few diversions left her. She couldn't play tennis any more, or swim, or dance, the way she used to. She couldn't enjoy shopping; to go out in the evening to any sort of entertainment had become a veritable effort. After dinner she wanted, generally, nothing so much as to get her corsets off, and to relax. . . . She didn't enjoy reading because it made her bend over. . . .

There was actually no pleasure left her. This abominable corpulence had taken them all. It was like a disease. But she only made it worse by fighting it. She might as well give in. Lots of women were fat and they appeared to get along well enough. Probably, once having accepted the condition, one became adjusted to it as to everything else. And she wasn't as fat as some. She glanced down at her bulging hips and abdomen, painfully bound by the stays that tortured her at every breath. And the vision bade fare to be too much for her. She hadn't much fortitude for realism of this kind. . . .

It distressed to the point of overwhelming her and added to her inertia. She might as well acquiesce. She would have, long ago, if it hadn't been for Jim. He kept hectoring her.

"Its such nonsense, Della. Such sheer laziness! Why don't you use a little will-power? That's all it requires. Don't eat so much, and exercise a little; walk now and then. I wish we'd never bought that motor; I'll agree to sell it if you will."

Sell the motor indeed! She was winded if she walked three blocks. And with their apartment situated, as it was, five blocks from the car-line! He was becoming actually cruel with his insistence. Why didn't he let her alone? As at this noon, for instance. His attitude during luncheon had been the third factor contributing to her complete exhaustion.

## II

THEY had taken luncheon together at the Blackstone, a place he disliked and she adored. —That may partly have accounted for his ill-nature. For he had done nothing but nag her during the whole meal. While she had given her order he had sat scowling to such a degree that the waiter couldn't have failed to notice, and at the end he hadn't been able to restrain himself.

"Parfait and French pastry! Della, you must be insane! That's so much solid fat for you."

Then as her face had drooped guiltily, "Look at that woman over there. That's what *you* should be eating. She doesn't need to. She's very obviously of that fastidious, delicate type that never get fat. But then, its always the thin people who diet and the fat ones who gorge."

She had looked, in order to cover the confusion and wretchedness with which his words filled her. The woman was just paying her check. In front of her stood the remnants of a plain lettuce salad and a half tumbler of iced tea. This had evidently constituted her entire luncheon! For an acute instant Della had envied that woman.

"What you have ordered there,"—her husband had still kept driving at her,—"is enough for three men. You know what these rich foods do to you;

and yet you won't exert any control. . . . Its monstrous! A child would have more restraint. . . . I should think your vanity would help you. You used to be so beautiful, one of the loveliest girls in Chicago! And look at you now. Only twenty-seven, and looking forty, if a day."

"Used to be beautiful!" Could it be that he considered she had lost all her beauty?

Again she daubed her eyes. Was every good point cancelled merely because she was too stout? She still had her lovely hair and her fabulous complexion. There weren't many woman who could go without paint and powder as she could. She had never needed to *touch* her face, not ever the eyebrows. They were naturally arched and very fine; her eye-lashes were heavy; her colour was so exquisitely distributed as to seem artificial; as for a lip-stick, she had never used one in her life. As a young girl, she had always been accused of making up. In those days the imputation had rather pleased her. Now she furiously represented any such suggestion as a disparagement of the only really good feature she still possessed. Her complexion was prettier than most thin women's; than that woman's over there, for example. . . .

She strained her weak eyes for a better look. Her sweet, rather vapid face wore an anxious, almost an evil expression. The woman wasn't phenomenally young, probably not so young as she; about thirty, Della surmised. And she wasn't, in the strict sense, beautiful. But there was that about her, nevertheless, which detained the eyes.

She was, to begin with, excessively slender; one of those freakishly slight modern types. And still not thin. Her contours were as sure as they were subtle. She missed being scrawny by only a hair's-breadth, and it was in the exquisite sheerness of this margin that rested her appeal. It gave her that poignance of frailty which is after all the essential quality of her sex.

She was evidently small-boned; this

was seen at a glance from the narrowness of her curved hips, her small wrists and ankles. And accompanying this slightness, a delicate roundness. This last was visible everywhere that the eye carried. Her arms, seen through the thin georgette of her waist, were small and curved, the rise at the elbow being proportioned exactly to the narrow wrist from which it sprang. Her chest was straight but by no means concave; for all its firm white tautness not a bone was visible. Her breasts, also outlined beneath her thin waist, were neither flat nor full, but exquisitely *right*. Her waist was relatively large; a twenty-five inch tape, however, would easily have spanned it; her hips swelling down from it with rare finesse, appeared scarcely wider; only enough to include that subtle but inescapable curve of her long, tight skirt as it fell from her waist to her ankles; to support it and give it grace. The ankles were, in their slightness, distinctly excessive. But the feet matched them: long, extravagantly narrow, extravagantly arched.

It was only at this point that Della thought of looking at the woman's face. She rose to it—more and more sparingly—from the feet, as it were.

About it there was little to arrest one at the first glance. It wasn't striking, and as to features it was distinctly commonplace. The hair was soft, not too heavy; dull brown; but beautifully done with the same adherence to close firm lines that in general distinguished her. The eyes were large and blue, with heavy lashes and a peering near-sighted look behind which watched, however, some profounder quality that Della couldn't for the moment fathom. The nose was unequivocally bad; heavy, clumsy, not in key with the delicacy of the rest. The mouth was sullen in repose and the heavy rouge which marked it out, marked it as a defect.

At least Della thought so, until she saw the woman smile. Just a little, but behind the smile gleamed a row of very perfect teeth. In the light of it

the whole face flared up into something like salience; the eyes caught the gleam; even the clear, but somewhat unpleasant pallor seemed to quicken; the murkiness gave way to intelligence.

It was in that illumination that Della got the full import of those careless myopic eyes; that pull at the back of them of something steadily feline, something triumphant. The woman was completely cognizant of herself and of her power; she was self-assured and unconcerned behind the neutral factors of her long, plain gown — which after all obscured nothing — and her pallid, mediocre face.

Della felt her chin quivering, her hands clenching and unclenching. At this moment the other walked past her, apologizing in some foreign language. The glance she had given her had been full of good-humour and — oblivion. There had been absent from it even the usual disparagement. Della realized, sharply how — to this woman — she no longer even figured; she was no more than a chair against the wall. . . .

### III

SHE sat on, quivering, after the other had passed out of sight. Through all her numbness of spirit as well as body shot a nerve of pain. *She* had been like that once, arresting, seductive. In the same manner she had been confident and negligent, *too* negligent.

This one would never be too negligent. She was one of those, Della surmised, who could live on lettuce three times a day if necessary, for the sake of the exquisite little body of hers. It was the altar at which she worshipped, the sole altar probably. One deduced this from the conscious tension of her long, slim hands with their decorative, almost too precious, nails; from the manner in which she had been scented.

That pervasive, insidious fragrance had never been the result of a mere drop of perfume hastily applied. It was the kind of ensemble that comes from a thousand sources. From skin bathed in a scented bath with scented

soap of the most expensive kind, and afterwards powdered with some very special powder to which it has become intured; from undergarments that have laid for days among sachet; from hair and eyebrows and ears and lips and fingers that have been pointed with the same insistent, slightly malignant perfume. . . . That sophisticated aura of fragrance which had enveloped her was the product of a very elaborate and painstaking technique.

Della had always known that such a technique existed and that some women acquired it and used it. But she had never bothered. She had relied, rather, on natural factors, like a peach-blown complexion and auburn curls. That was how she had been *sold*. Another woman would have felt the fat threatening, seen it even incipiently blunting her contours, smudging and cheapening her, and would have stopped it at whatever heroic cost.

And *she* could still do this. It only meant a little will-power, as her husband had so caustically said. She would go on a diet this very day; she would buy the book, *Eat and Grow Thin*, which her masseuse had recommended. Jim shouldn't have to look from her, wistfully, to the wives of his friends; to the women on the stage; with, afterwards, that weary droop back to her, full of fealty and abhorrence. . . . He should be able to look at her again lovingly, *proudly*. She would make herself over! She would begin to-day, now, by walking home! It was at least seven miles. She shouldn't get there until ten at night very likely. But no matter.

She rose, full of resolution, and got as far as the lobby. There she was arrested by two factors: the sight of tea-drinkers in the tea-room, and the detaining hand of a friend.

"Why, Della? Are you here? How providential! You'll have tea with me, won't you? Dick is to meet me at six, and it only just five, isn't it? A whole hour to kill. What, you aren't taking tea? To reduce? Oh, I see. But my dear, *tea* can't make you fat. Plain

tea! Well then, at least sit with me while I drink some."

And Carrie Norton buckled her arm into Della's and drew her, still protesting, in the direction of the tea-room.

Della sank comfortably back in her chair and let the music wash from her mind the distressing considerations that had, for the last hour, been ruffling her usual calm. She stretched one hand out over the table, automatically reaching for the *carte*.

"You'll change your mind, and have something, won't you?" Carrie urged. "After all, one cup of tea and one cake couldn't make you very fat. And you can always start dieting, you know."

Della still hesitated. She felt suddenly the enormity of what she had set out to do, and her inability to compass it. A great despondency bore down upon her — a despondency which she wanted lifted at any cost. Again she felt those weak, facile tears. There was no use for her to struggle; it was too late; she had let it all go too long; she might as well acquiesce. Besides, those cakes that a waiter was carrying past her on a tray were irresistible.

"I suppose I may as well. I shan't have dinner for another two hours."

"A pot of tea," Carrie ordered, "and French pastry. Is that right dear?"

"Oh, no. I detest tea, you know. I'd rather have chocolate if you don't mind, and perhaps an ice."

The other nodded somewhat doubtfully. "But, Della, I *would* be a little more careful. Chocolate, you know, is terribly fattening."

There again sounded that note of contempt. Della cynically laughed. "My dear, you know that you don't *really* think it matters. *Look* at me."

The chocolate was deliciously rich and warm. As Della sipped it the anxiety left her face and there returned the old, familiar sweet and rather vapid expression. She was so comfortable; she asked nothing better than to sit there nibbling at her cake and listening to Carrie's chatter. The other disturbed her by suddenly straining to look at someone to whom Della's back was turned.

"It's Lvova. The *première danseuse* of the Russian ballet. Do turn around, Della. She won't notice you."

It was such an effort to turn round; Della hated to bother; but she managed it just in time to see, entering the room, the woman whom she had studied previously with such interest.

Her friend was gasping her admiration.

"Isn't she charming? But so subdued-looking. Not in the least as she looks on the stage. However, you can't miss that ravishing figure of hers, even in those clothes. Did you ever see a more perfect body?"

"Yes, she's lovely," Della tepidly agreed. "But isn't she horribly thin?"



THE job of a woman in the world is to listen to a man talking about himself. The job of a man is to listen to a woman talking about other women.



THE man who likes cocktails *after* his meals is the same fellow who calls a girl Miss Jones after he has kissed her.

# Village Nocturne

*By John McClure*

BENEATH the gray and silver sky  
The sombre, solemn houses lie  
Where sleep, in sleep as still as death,  
Self-righteous, lustful, godly men,  
Defenders of the ancient faith,  
The hoary patriarchs, stern in sin,

Stern, concupiscent, prone-to-pray,  
Defenders of the Ancient Word,  
Snug with their women, grim as they,  
Dragons of virtue and the Lord.

No sound, no motion in the gloom—  
Is the world holding back its breath  
Awaiting the immemorial doom  
Fore-shadowed in the ancient faith?

The watcher wonders. His eyes move  
From earth to heaven and they see  
The huge moon peering from above  
In mock solemnity.



EVERY man of forty divides women into two classes: those whom it would be pleasant to kiss, but dangerous, and those with whom it would be neither pleasant nor dangerous.



THE early bird often catches the consequences.



INTOXICATION works miracles—it enables a man to carry on a dialogue with himself.

# Incongruity

*By Charles J. Finger*

## I

THE shade of the water tank was really the only place in which one could sit in comfort, for Kent, Texas, is the hottest and driest place in the state. I cursed the Southern Pacific Railroad and all its officials when I was first sent there to report to the Commercial Department on the cultivation of arid lands. With the report finished, and twelve hours to wait, life seemed easier. That evening I had helped the Captain water his peach orchard and pluck off the yellowing leaves. That luscious peaches could be grown in a section of the country where it rained only once or twice a year, and that peach trees could be watered by pouring a few pints of water into a section of stove pipe set at the roots, had astonished me. I said as much to the Captain, telling him that it was "incongruous."

He pounced on the word with a grunt. "Incongruous! What's incongruous? Let me tell you this, young man, men use that word when facts don't fit in with their notions and imaginings. Here you see a one time ship-captain living on a desert and tending a water tank, and you call it incongruous. Why shouldn't a sailor live in a desert? Why shouldn't he tend a water tank? What's incongruous about that? You fill your heads with a notion, you fellows do, that peaches can't be grown in arid lands, and when you see that they can, you talk about incongruity. You build up a fantastic world for yourselves, you imagine fantastic people, you write books and plays with sure

shot cowboys and pants hitching sailors, narrow chested store clerks and whining preachers, keen-eyed soldiers and idiotically happy negroes, treacherous Mexicans and noble Americans, whiskered Russians and funny Frenchmen: all that kind of thing you accept, and then what do you find? You come across a cowboy and find perhaps an ignorant bully. You meet a preacher with a chest like a prize-fighter. Your sailor may be an artist like Conrad. Your negro may be melancholy and your Mexican gentle. Your perfect American may be a lynching bully, your Russian an effeminate dandy, your Frenchman surly and your Englishman a conceited ass. Then you say 'incongruous.'

"Let me tell you this: it's the world of literature and the drama that's incongruous, if you want to know. This setting up of types—that and the believing in them—that's what's wrong. Take yourself now. I heard you say 'ain't' a dozen times. Yet you parsed and analyzed at school, and went through Gould Browne's grammar, didn't you? Don't you see that the incongruous thing is the grammar book?

"You people are always everlastingly setting up theories. Like what we was talking about the other day. Those arrow heads we picked up. According to the theory, every Indian made arrow heads and was skilful at it. I say he wasn't. Some of them made good ones and some of them bad ones and some of them couldn't make any at all. I seen it myself down south when I used to run through the Straits. I seen an Indian turn out a

pretty good arrow in a few minutes out of a piece of broken bottle. Then I seen others made as clumsy as a child would make them. Yet your scientists see the two kinds and classify them as made in different ages. Neo-lithic and Paleo-lithic. See the point?

"It came to my mind the other day how often, when a writer wanted to show off his cleverness, he would refer to some little known country, that is, little known to *him*, and use it as a type of all that's bad. Big as a Patagonian. Stunted as a *Tierra del Fuegian*. All that sort of thing.

"Once I took a passenger from Patagonia and she was the best violin player I ever listened to. Yes, and I seen a man who lived with a pack of Indians and all he asked for was to be given a cheese! Fact! You'd call it incongruous? I'd call it natural.

"I thought of writing the story once and fixed up a little of it in my mind, intending to get it set down how things are. But I haven't the gift. I got some of the parts into shape in a way, to be sure. Some of it I thought over so as to get it by heart in a way. And yet there's nothing to the story and it kind of leaves you in the air."

## II

FOR a moment the Captain paused. Then he launched into it.

"Down in the southern end of the American continent," he began, "where the oceans meet, and the land peters out, it is never quite comfortable. Winter wipes out springtime, and summer jumps right into winter. It snows off and on from May to August, and blows every day in summer. A disagreeable wind it is, too, that blows chill. A cold piercing wind, even when the air is bright. If there happens to be a calm, you know a storm is brewing, and when it storms you curse creation, and its maker. A man may get used to it, possibly some do, but I could never understand why

any sane white man would go there to live. Yet, there are white folk down there, though they seem in a hurry to get away at any cost—at least those did that I talked to. How people ever come to drift there I don't know. Adventure and gold and sheep raising are inducements, I suppose. Only once I came into real contact with anyone who did want to stay.

"I had the *Volumnia* in those days, a freight steamer running between Bremen and Valparaiso, in the general trade. We never made the Horn, but took the Straits passage, and always hated it when we didn't get through on two tides. Making Punta Arenas either way was all right, but getting laid up between there and either end of the Straits was trouble. I often thought of old Magellan daring to go through and not knowing what he was up against. The evening we picked up a Patagonia passenger, we had made Martha Island when the tide left us, and didn't dare to chance the narrows. That little island, by the way, Magellan cast anchor by. We might have gotten through, but the sky looked none too good. It was a frowning, angry sky. I noticed the looks of things from the bridge as the anchor chain rattled down.

"The sea was gray, but the setting sun had laid down a belt of silver that ran fan-wise to *Tierra del Fuego*. You get that kind of combination in your mind and it sticks there, when two or three storms come on you. Being so close to shore is what troubles a man. With plenty of sea room it would be different. I got jammied on a lee shore once. But down there you see the skeletons of ships here and there and a melancholy sight it is. Beached ships and dead men worry me. There was a misty gloom that hid the line between sky and sea from east to west, and we knew by those signs that the wind would soon raise. There's an old iron coal hulk anchored fore and aft, double anchors, in Punta Arenas roads that's been drifted from her moorings and fetched

up on Tierra del Fuego more than once. However, we were in fairly good shape, what with Martha Island, and Isabel and Magdalena between us and the west. Grand old names they had down there. Religion meant something to those old fellows who first named those islands and capes. Yet, with all their religion, they were bloody-minded men.

"As usual, ten minutes after the silver belt had gone, and when the color of the water had changed to an oily gray, with a kind of boiling, what we expected came. First, a cat's paw ran over the sea. You always noticed that. It's like the first sign of the toothache. You know that troubles are due and can't be dodged. Then began that heaving feel—like a giant asleep, I always say. Next came the white bands of breaking water and then the wind. Wheeoo! It's worse than a typhoon. Worse than a hurricane. It shrieks, and howls and whistles; rope ends crack and yards creak. The very rails tremble to your touch. You feel the full fury of it. It starts at the mast head and the ship heels to the force of it. Then the man on the bridge is grateful for the canvas rigging that shelters him, I tell you, though sometimes even that is stripped to ribbons. The waves leap at you, and run up the ship's sides, and the spray makes you bend your head or gasp. That's the time when the men below get out their cards and play seven up, and the fellow with the accordion makes things worse.

"The first thing I caught sight of after the blast was a bright mark to the windward, just like a point in the mist. It grew to a speck, then a patch, and finally a sail. Through the glass it showed itself to be a small open boat, rigged with a leg-of-mutton sail. She rode the waves well, and held her course, bearing down on us as far as I could make out. It was either masterly handling or sheer luck; you couldn't tell which. As she neared, we made out the man at the tiller, and another figure crouched low, but

with the wind and breaking spray it was hard to see. The ticklish time came when she neared us, for the water was bad, but the job was well done.

"I didn't think he would manage it. He rounded our bow by a close shave and brought up in our dead water. Then the little old doll sail dropped and he slipped alongside, holding her off with his hand, though they slid aft rapidly. The wind had dropped suddenly, though the water of course ran rough and choppy. We cast him a line, he caught it and Abraham leaped down and helped him, after a sign from me, catching the little craft cleverly on the top of a swell. The two of them managed well enough, and in no time we had the girl on deck, and a package or so of her dunnage. The man and Abraham followed. The little craft was dropped under our counter, where she rode safe, but out of sight on account of the gathering darkness.

"Now, as I often used to say to my wife, things do not happen trim and ship-shape in life. On the stage and in books, yes, but in life no. Incongruous. That's the word. Things are incongruous. Men that read and never see, get half of things. On the stage, in moving pictures, in books, it's the same. Look at a ship scene on a stage with all hands grouped to face the on-looker: Never was anything like that. In life things are jammed up. Crowded. Confused. So was this. When things are happening, it's something like a dream. Just a series of happenings that you patch together afterwards.

"Imagine yourself getting a glimpse of the group now. You must see it by the light of a binnacle lamp. The men from for'd all crowded aft in glistening oil skins, and the girl slim and tall, with wet curling hair under a close fitting fur cap that had a smart little feather in it, a short red feather, it was, standing straight up. She had a tight fitting coat reaching her knees, and below that her stocking legs.

Neat legs. Straight legs. You noticed them early, for in those days you did not see legs as you do now. I'm going on sixty and I know. You only saw pictures of them in the *Police Gazette*, and, let me tell you there were not many ships started out without a supply of that literature aboard.

"Anyway, this girl had pinned up her skirts to keep them away from the sea water. On the outside of the group of men was the stranger with Abraham. No hat. Black, bushy hair. Middle height. Leather coat with red flannel lining showing, and jack boots that reached to his thighs. He had spurs on, too—spurs on board ship, mind you!—big Spanish spurs! I begged them of him before he left as a curio for my boy. Spurs on ship board's incongruous, though. So, too, was what he said, for his first words were:

"'Agnes, how's the violin?'

"Not a word about who's who or Billy be damned, or anything, mind you. Just about the violin. Well, she rummaged around a little in her dunnage and peeked to see.

"'Sans défauts, mon cher,' she said.

"I caught the French, for I sailed out of Bordeaux going on five years. Now, there was more of the incongruous, as I came to see afterwards. Here was a Norwegian girl, as I found out, and he—I couldn't quite place him, sometimes he seemed to be Irish, sometimes American or Australian. His language was mixed up, which is the way with people down there. She had little English and he no Norwegian, so they used French a great deal. However, that's nothing to do with the story.

"Presently, the men moved away, and she and the stranger were alone under me. I was still on the bridge. She clapped her hands and skipped a little on her toes, like a child. Being a sea-going Norwegian she did not realize the danger she had been in. They're like that. It's in the blood. Then she remembered her skirts and

unpinned them and I was a little sorry for that.

"As she bent over she said:

"'Maintenant, nous avons le sauf conduit, n'est ces pas, mon Carl? Eh.'

"He laughed and threw back his stout shoulders. 'Try English, sweetheart,' he said.

"'The adventure was fine,' she said. 'It was the best sail I ever had. And now Norway. Norway—Sandefjord! Carl, Carl!'

"I joined them then, being a little curious about the affair, and after a little looking them over, suggested going below.

"'Captain,' said this Carl as we went, 'I want to make arrangements. You are bound for Bremen, ain't you? . . . Will you take a passenger? . . . I know you're a freighter. . . . But this is an emergency. There's lots to explain and all that. . . . But it's all right. I'm willing to pay. It's most like a case of life and death.'

"In the cabin talk was easier. We had pretty fair quarters on the *Volumnia*. She took off her coat, stepped to the mirror set in the door panel, and did womanly things to herself. You know how a woman does. A touch here and a touch there. Then she linked her arm through the man's. They were a bonny pair standing there, bright-eyed and rosy-cheeked, and she not a day older than eighteen, he three or four years older, I dare say. There was a little general talk, and then I let them know that I wanted to know.

"'It's this way,' said he. 'I haven't much money to speak of, and we left in a rush. Besides, we don't carry loose cash in Patagonia. But you can let her have a cabin, can't you, Cap.'

"Now I let them run on, and explain for some time and then, 'Maybe I'll make it somehow,' I said. I would have liked to have carried the girl free, for the affair seemed interesting and I like to help when I can, especially in a runaway case, which this clearly was, but the owners were Bremen people and it's not easy to do

things quietly in the shipping line. People on shore are free to cut up all sort of capers, but we sailors are watched pretty close. There's mighty little freedom on the sea. Well, there was some talking, with me hesitating and considering the steward, and all that, then Carl started in.

"This is Miss Neilson, Captain—Agnes Neilson. She's going to her home in Sandefjord, Norway. I guess I got enough to pay the price." And then followed more explanations, with the girl helping out now and then.

"He dug down in his corduroy pants and began producing things. A couple of English sovereigns, a \$5 gold piece and some loose silver—Chilean, and some Argentine paper. Then he laid down a watch and chain, a silver ring, and three small gold coins that were strange to me. I looked at them closely.

"'Popper money,' he explained, seeing my curiosity. 'In Tierra del Fuego Julio Popper's got a concession, you know, a gold mining monopoly, and makes his own money. Works Argentine convicts. Graft game. These are worth a gramme each. I been there working round. . . . And there's this, too.'

"He laid down a small bottle of gold dust, then fished in an inner pocket and produced three or four folded papers.

"These here are horse papers. That arrow's my brand and you can keep them till your next trip and I'll be on hand to redeem 'em when you make Punta Arenas. Or you can give them to the Captain del Puerto."

"I suggested he had enough collateral without the horse certificates.

"Yes, but you see, I want you to take out the passage money and give the rest to Agnes. She's got to get to Sandefjord, you know. Bremen isn't the end of her trip. Say, Captain—"

"He broke off and turned to the girl. "Dirai-je?" he asked.

"She nodded. Then he explained in Alfred Jingle fashion—you know, choppy, disconnected sentences. This was partly his nervousness, for he was a nervous kind of chap. It don't follow that, because a fellow can bring a boat up in a gale of wind, he isn't nervous. Men are everything at different times. Many a hero's just a fool runagate. Anyway, the lad says:

"It's this way, Captain. I'm going north soon's I can. As soon's I settle up things and sell out. We're going to get married. Her father's old Neilson, skipper on the three-masted schooner *Adulacion*. He brought her out here and she wants to go back home. This is no place for a decent woman, anyway. And so, well, I'm helping her out, you see. That's all, and it's all straight and square and above board, Cap."

"Now, I knew old Neilson. He was a cantankerous, beetle-browed, hard-drinking old scoundrel and just the fellow to try and make a soft thing for himself by trading off his daughter. Marrying her off, I mean! It's all the same. Piecing this and that together, I came to see how matters stood. Leastways, I fancied I did. Well, I assured him at last that the collateral, so to speak, would suffice, though I didn't want to seem too willing, for to tell the truth, I sort of wanted to have that girl along on the trip. The steward thought he could fix up a place for her.

"When it was all settled, this Carl threw off his leather coat and stood there clad in his blue jersey with a bright red handkerchief loosely knotted about his throat, looking happily at the girl. She smiled back at him and a prettier set of teeth you never saw. Of course, we'd been standing around all this time, and now sat down. Up she jumped a moment later, then leaned over and kissed him fair and square on the lips. It was good to see, though he wiped it off as a boy does when his mother kisses him. Well, I lit my pipe and pretended not to notice. Youth is youth!"

"'My Carl,' she said, 'we must *not* lose each other.'

"'Never fear, Agnes,' said he. 'One doesn't fight for nothing in this world. (Badly fooled, wasn't he?) Things always come out right if you stick. You're safe enough, girl. They can't get you now. And you'll weigh anchor at the turn of the tide. But it'll be three months before I get to Norway. Wonder what I'll do there? I'll get back and sell out at Gallegos, then vamoose.'

"That was the line of talk, all planning, hoping and expecting with everything as right as that girl in Browning's poem. After a good deal more of it, he looked at his watch laying on the table with the other truck, and spoke about the tide. I seen that the lad knew the sea in these parts.

"'Lord,' he said, it's blowing again harder than ever.'

"The wind had risen again after a lull. That's the way of it at that time of the year.

"'But you? You shall get back in safety, dear?' she asked.

"'It's no trick. Never fear,' said he, with a grin. But the grin was half bravado.

"There was some more planning and a good deal of laughing. She looked at him intently, leaning her cheek on her hand, her elbow resting on the table. I swear she was in dead earnest. One can tell. Yet there were no dramatics about it. She stuck in that name, 'Hero,' a bit too often, but it was only a pet name with her. I want you to get that straight.

"'Oh, Carl,' she said, suddenly. I almost forgot. My dear little Shakespeare book!'

"'Hell, yes,' he said. 'I clean forgot. You'll want that on the trip. But I kept it dry.'

"He pulled up his jersey, thrust his hands into his pants and brought out a little, red, leather covered book—a Temple edition. It was 'A Midsummer Night's Dream.' She took it, fluttered a page or two, then closed it again, petted it and kissed it.

"'Oh, *mon cher!* *Je suis heureuse!*' she said, and, taking the sleeve of his leather jacket that hung over the back of the chair, kissed that. 'I love that coat,' she said.

"Now see more incongruity there. In ordinary, you don't associate a Shakespeare play with runaway girls in the Straits of Magellan, do you? You never see a girl kiss a coat sleeve in a moving picture. And when we had a bite of supper, there was more of it, for the talk ran on books for quite a time. That annoyed me a little, for I wanted to get this Carl to talk about Patagonia. A sailor never gets to know anything about foreign parts. The girl, too, she liked to talk about books, and in her delight presently dropped into Norwegian, which none of us understood, and then, when she found herself doing so, stopped, confused, and blushed. So they fell to planning again and then dropped into French, which he spoke less readily than she. So I got up to leave them awhile, and before I had closed the door, she was on his knee.

"To tell the truth, I felt pretty bad a little later on when his boat was brought alongside, and Abraham dropped over and stepped the little mast. She clung to her lad then and kissed him over and over again like my little girl used to do when I left for a trip, he, meanwhile, saying nothing but just patting her on the back. Then he stepped up to me and said: 'Take care of her, Captain. She's true blue.'

"I swear I saw the glitter of water in his eyes as he shook my hand. Then over the side he went, and he and his little craft vanished into the dark, dancing among the white caps like a mad thing, and he too busy to look back, of course. There was just a wave of his hand.

"She stood looking awhile and when it was out of sight, flung out her arms and cried:

"'Oh, come back, my boy! Come back! Take me with you! Then, after a moment, she said, 'Oh, Carl—

hero, why did I let you go?" And then she went below crying.

"As I said, I felt pretty bad for awhile, but Hyde, who was with me on the bridge, said, 'She'll get over it. Girls always get over that sort of thing.'

### III

"WE were well abreast of Tristan d'Achuna before Agnes cheered up. We did what we could for her, especially the cook, who was a kind-hearted Portuguese, and I had her playing chess in a week. That's a pastime for me, and so is cribbage. Chess and cribbage and reading poetry. I sure love poetry. But chess beats all. You know how it is with a game of chess and learning a new one the game. First you get to wishing they could play better. Then they win a game for the first time and you're sure it was a fluke, or you were careless and could win if you gave your mind to it. Then, one day, you wake up to find your pupil's beating you two out of three. Of course you get angry. No one likes to be checkmated. A chess player'd quarrel with an angel. Well, what with the cook and the sea air and the chess, she began to perk up and it was good to see her around.

"Playing with her, little by little I learned a whole chapter or two of her affair with Carl. She seemed to be reminded of it one night when I had threatened her queen with my bishop. It was a neat trick and I had worked for it quite a few moves. She caught on, though, and covered with her knight. Then she clapped her hands and laughed. It was none of your 'tee-hee' laughs, but a real laugh—a jolly laugh like that of a school girl at the age when they are sweetest.

"The knight to the rescue of the queen!" she said. "That reminds me of Carl. Don't you think he's a dear boy, Captain?"

"Then followed some of the tale, though it took some prompting, of course. It seemed that she had met the lad while she was stopping at the

little ramshackle place they call a hotel at Punta Arenas. He had come in from the camp—a rough-looking, tough-looking chap, I suppose. Anyway, he stood by listening to her play the piano, then said he liked a certain piece, picking up the book. She had told him that it was a duet. Then it came out that he could play the piano, too. There's more of what critics would call incongruity. But then once I seen a nigger down in New Orleans talking broad Scotch. He had been born and raised in Perthshire. It's easy explained, you see, when you come to know the facts. But if a playwright had put a character such as him on the stage talking with a Highland accent and splashing in a word or two of Gaelic now and then, as he did, the critics would go plum crazy.

"However, these two got to duet playing, and that led to love. Music always does. When you come to think of it, so does everything else. I fell in love with my wife because she had a lisp. Anyway, these two were thrown together until old man Neilson blew in, and when he came ashore and found how things stood, there was an end of it. He took the girl aboard the *Adulacion* and kept her there. Then one night, it was in a storm, too, this Carl got a boat and came aboard, took her off and started across the border with a half dozen horses, thinking they'd make the Argentine and be married in Gallegos.

"But it seems that the *alcalde* there was a kind of friend of Neilson's. That's natural, it being a port with a good deal of smuggling going on. Anyway, as soon as they set foot there, Carl was put in *cuartel* and the girl taken to the wife of the *alcalde* where she had to stay until old Neilson dropped anchor. Then, of course, he took her back with him to Punta Arenas. Carl got out and found her again. Then followed another runaway, which brought her on board the *Volumnia*. Of course, it was all very worrying and exciting, I expect, but then they probably enjoyed it. Youth

is youth, and adventure's dear to the soul of it.

"Well, as she perked up, she dressed prettier and was good to look at. Every day she sat on the main-hatch. That was her favorite place, although I had had a poop awning rigged up. But contrary to usual opinion, it's not always hot in the tropics. I've seen it cool enough for a light overcoat once or twice. I reckon she liked the hatch because it was there she last stood with her Carl. Anyway, she wrote him a letter every day and gave it me every evening when we sat down to chess. I was to mail all of them when we got to Bremen.

"Things went along that way until we ran into some of those tropical sunsets. You never get tired of looking at them. They always make me think what a silly, dirty, fussy bug a man is, grubbing away on ships and in towns when there are places to live in and be happy in. It's the same kind of thought that gets you when you wonder why the Esquimaux don't come south to a better climate. It's there for them. They've only got to walk.

"Let's see. Where was I? Oh, yes. This night was when Tristan d'Achuna showed itself a brown gob on the eastern horizon. It seemed to be swimming in a sky of gold and purple and crimson that evening. There were violet splashes across the sky, and the sea was opal. And there was a great milk-white streak churning behind us. Standing at the rail aft stood Agnes. She was dressed in some light, fluttery thing with a blue sash, and her hair was braided in two long plaits. Right then I wanted to take her in my arms and love her, so young and healthy and straight she was.

"Well, later that night, I sat fanning myself and looking at the sky. The glory had gone out of the west, and above was silver and velvet with star dust sprinkled. The soft swish of the sea sounded like rustled silk. Then the music began. So skilfully

she played that you would have thought there were two violins. Soon it seemed as if all things harmonized, and the faint thump, thump of the engines was as much a part of it all as the moon itself. I wouldn't have moved then for a fortune. I only wanted to hear. There was music that I knew, and music that I didn't, and the last was the best. It set me thinking of a life on shore, and I fancied myself a fool for following the sea. What is an ideal, anyway, but discontent?

"After that, we had music for many nights, and presently Hyde joined in. He could sing well, too, and she often played a sort of accompaniment to his song. On those nights, those quiet nights, when the sea is phosphorent and now and then flying fish leaps like a silver arrow, the little concerts were doubly enjoyable. I loved to look up at the mast head and watch it swaying as much as I used to enjoy laying on the grass when a boy, and marking the tree tops wave against the sky.

"Then, one night when we were nearing the Cape Verde Islands, I chanced upon the two of them, Hyde and Agnes, and his arm was about her waist. I could see them against the white wake.

#### IV

"WELL, I never interfere. I never did. You can't try to set things straight outside yourself without making a worse mess than that which you would clear away. But after that, the two of them seemed to become lovers of the shadows, and the music became the music of love, and then stopped altogether. I never got really suspicious, though, until we came to Las Palmas. There, going below, I ran into the two of them coming from her cabin. She looked ill at ease and her face was covered with blushes when she saw me. That was the first time I really suspected anything; but, of course, I never knew for sure anyway. One never does. It's all guess work

at the best of times. At the Canaries, where we put in for coal, Hyde got shore leave and she went with him and they came back as happy as two children.

"When we warped up alongside the dock at Bremen, the very first one to step on board was Hyde's wife with her little boy, so it came about that I was the last one on the ship that Agnes talked to. She was one of those women one meets now and then who seem to part the curtain that separates man and woman. Some of them do it with a word and some with a look. Since I had seen her with Hyde in the cabin, I had, in a way, cooled off to both of them. The chess games had stopped and she had given me no more daily letters to take care of. Yet my coolness fell from me when she came up to me as I stood by the gang way. She put up her gloved hand, and, as a child might, toyed with the button of my coat.

"'Captain,' she said, 'I am sorry we have not been friends as we were.'

"Of course, I said things intended to be pleasant, then mentioned the letters that she had given me to mail. Then, before I well knew what I was saying, I added, 'But you have not written lately. Poor Carl!'

"She looked troubled for an instant, but the cloud passed. Then she said: 'But, yes, I have. Every day as usual.' At that she held up her left hand, and there, sure enough, was a packet of letters.

"'Shall I take them, too?' I asked, reaching for them.

"'No,' said she, and, as she spoke, she reached over the side and dropped them into the black water between the ship and the dock. They floated for a moment, then swirled under.

"Now, I have always said that there is no understanding women, and I still think so, though I haven't seen one to speak of for a long time. There she stood as cool as a cucumber, as the saying goes. She looked me straight in the eyes and said:

"'So, Captain, please throw the rest

of them away. You will, will you not?'

"'But what about Carl,' I asked. 'There he is waiting for you. Or he is coming for you?'

"'Captain,' said she, 'it is all different now. He is a good lad. The way he would have me I am not. It is nothing. Men think too much of some things and women humor them.'

"There wasn't much I could say, but I did manage to ask her what I should say if Carl came aboard at Punta Arenas next trip.

"'Tell him—,' she began and then stopped. Mind you, she looked me straight in the eye all the time. After awhile she added, 'It is nothing. It is silly. Tell him nothing. What you will.'

"Then she went gaily enough down the gang plank, waving to me once from the dock, and was swallowed up in the crowd.

## V

"THE *Volumnia* had made the round trip between Bremen and Valparaiso twice and Carl did not come aboard at Punta Arenas, so pretty near half a year had gone and the affair had nearly passed from my mind before I picked up the thread of it again. Then the Company agent at Valparaiso gave me orders to stop near Dawson Island to pick up a load of seal and otter skins. Now, outside of Tierra del Fuego, Dawson Island is the most Godforsaken place in the wide world, believe me. Every man sailing the Magellan Straits knows that. There are chains of low, snow-patched hills, and a piercing cold wind rushing down them even when the sky is blue. There is a lonely mountain and shrub forest, a sandy beach with mussel-covered rocks, black and ugly, here and there, and a crowd of silent Indians paddling about in canoes. That's the memory I get of the place.

"We dropped anchor there one snowy day in June. There was the

same ugly hill dropping down to the yellowish-white sand beach. The place looked gloomy, cold and wet. The water was a grayish, slatey green, and hatefully, oily smooth. Sort of sliding water it was. Until you saw the pigmy people on the beach pushing out their canoes, and noticed how little they seemed, you would have thought the anchorage was only a few yards from shore. There was nothing to tell distance by.

"We saw to it that everything that was loose or stealable was securely fastened, for we were told that these people do not leave much that is liftable behind. A piece of iron, we were told, made their hands itch. But that is all nonsense. When you know it, there is not much difference between savages and civilized people as far as honesty is concerned. But we were a bit afraid of the lice. Then the women, too—a man wants to be careful, for a run on the medicine chest is no joke on a long voyage with half the men laid up.

"Presently they were alongside—a half hundred of them. Naked, of course. Stark naked, men, women and children. Some of them had a bit of capa strung across their shoulders, but most of them were stark. Somehow, they made me think of a picture I saw once at the Academy in London. It was one of those pictures you burn to look at but want to see when no one is around. Half ashamed you are, you know, and ashamed for being so. You see a lot of people passing such a picture with a side-long glance and then go to the other side of the room and take a good look while pretending to admire the Portrait of a Gentleman, or some Dutch scene with a windmill. You know the kind, I dare say. The one I have in mind showed a crowd of women bathing and standing around sunning themselves. Handsome figures, of course.

"These Indians were like that, only bronze. Good, clean, trim figures they were, with straight legs and half curly hair tossing like a mane. The cold

never bothers them. The snow falls on their naked bodies, and on the bodies of the babies, too, down there in the canoes. And they are a quiet people, a gentle folk. A woman will stand before you looking you square in the eye, straight as a spear, strip, stark naked, hands hanging down easily or resting on hips. It's you, all dressed and covered then, that is ashamed.

"Well, sir, in one of the canoes there was Carl himself. In his canoe were two women. It gave me such a start at first that I almost expected to see Agnes there. He swarmed up on deck, just waved to me, and did his business with the purser, delivering the skins and getting the truck he needed in exchange. Biscuits, sugar, knives, blankets, tools and that kind of thing was what he asked for and got. Then the main bunch paddled back to shore, getting their canoes over the kelp beds cleverly, and the whole job was done in less than two hours, though we had an extra hour on account of the tide's turn. Well, wishing to learn something of the country, I asked Carl in the cabin, while his two women waited in the canoe with a crowd of curious sailors gaping at them from above. Do you know that at times you feel kind of ashamed for your own people when you are among savages?

"Forthwith Carl asked me for a few books, a Dutch cheese and a ham. I wanted him to take a few newspapers, but he did not seem to care for them. Then I opened up with a few questions about the country, but got no information. I suppose it would have been the same way if he had tried to get me to talk about the ship.

"'You got Agnes to Bremen all right?' he asked.

"'Yes. It was a pleasant trip. That girl could certainly play the violin,' I said.

"'Glad she got away. These Straits 're not fit for a white woman anyway. Of course, I never wrote. When I got back to Punta Arenas that night they

put me in *cuartel*. Three weeks I was in that rotten place and then beat it.'

"'Pardoned,' I hazarded.

"'Pardoned nothing! Not on your life! Long as you can get money they let you out between six and nine every night for a *pasea*. I had money because I got them to sell some of my horses. They charged me about 80 per cent commission. Well, on these *paseas* there's a guard along, of course. You're on your honor, you see. One day I thought "To hell with honor!" and hit the guard in the jaw, made for the beach, got a boat and beat it. There wasn't any romance about it, you see. Romantic doing don't come my way. Well, of course I can't go back there. I'm going to stay here till I get a stake and then try my luck gold digging. . . . Wonder if Agnes ever wrote?"

"'Why,' said I, 'she wrote every day on the ship. When she left at Bremen she said to tell you—you know—she was true and all that. . . . She thought a lot of you.'

"'Yes, she was a straight girl all right. Wish I could have held up my end of the bargain. What's a man to do? I had to beat it. If it had been a free country, now—. You see, knocking the daylights out of a Chilean soldier's no joke when you are out on honor. If you get caught it means a 9 A. M. fiesta up against a stone wall with a firing squad for company. So then I landed here and got in the sealing game with these In-

dians. Of course, I got tied up. What's man to do? Of course, it's all off with Agnes now, but I'm glad she's out of it. She was too straight for me and my kind.'

"'Well, some day—,' I began.

"'No, Cap. No chance. Things are so that a woman's straighter than a man. They're built that way. You fellows in civilization are different to us down here. You can be straight. It's easy. Don't you know that sometimes I sort of wish that women weren't so good and pure and all that? I'm just a natural born scallywag, I guess.'

"The two of us smoked for awhile, saying nothing. Then, to make him feel better, I said:

"'Well, lad, they are that way and that's all there is to it. Maybe you are right and she was too good for you.'

"It was plain that he was half way pleased with that, judging by the way he smoked, for any man'd rather feel like a martyr than a fool. But on the whole I was rather disappointed with the conversation, for I wanted to learn something of the country, you see, and why he wanted to stay in it, but he fell to talking about Socialism and that kind of stuff and the chance was lost. That's the worst of following the sea. You go everywhere and see nothing but the same old thing.

"'Well, I'm getting sleepy and it's time to turn in. Good night.'



IT is a woman's glory to believe in a man when others distrust him; it is her tragedy to discover that the others are right.



IT is easy enough to convince a woman. The trouble is to keep her convinced.

# Inconclusive Result of a Clinical Experiment

*By S. Jay Kaufman*

**H**E and I were reading.

I said, "This philosophy seems to be that the unexpected always happens. It would say, for sample, that if a man said, 'I'd like to know you' to the first three women passing a given spot, not one would ask the conventional 'How dare you?'"

I said, "I think they would."

He said, "I think they would not."

We made a wager, both agreeing to speak to three women.

His three said to him, "You may," and he does.

My three said to me, "How dare you?"

Say, what's wrong with me?



## Song

*By Glenn Ward Dresbach*

**W**HAT shall I tell my old Love?  
Ah, yes! At last I know:  
"Your love was like a garden  
All cold and still with snow.  
You told me that when Spring came  
The golden fruit would grow."

What shall I tell my new Love?  
Only this I'll say:  
"My heart was chilled and hungry  
And Spring was far away—  
Your love is like a thrilled house  
When Summer came to stay!"



# Porcelain and Pink

(A One-Act Play)

By F. Scott Fitzgerald.

*A room in the downstairs of a summer cottage. High around the wall runs an art frieze of a fisherman with a pile of nets at his feet and a ship on a crimson ocean, a fisherman with a pile of nets at his feet and a ship on a crimson ocean—and so on. In one place on the frieze there is an overlapping—here we have half a fisherman with half a pile of nets at his foot, crowded damply against half a ship on half a crimson ocean. The frieze is not in the plot but frankly it fascinates me. I could continue indefinitely but I am distracted by one of the two objects in the room—a blue porcelain bath-tub. It has character, this bath-tub. It is not one of the new racing bodies but is small with a high tonneau and looks as if it were going to jump; discouraged probably by the shortness of its legs, it has submitted to its environment and to its coat of sky-blue paint. But it grumpily refuses to allow any patron completely to stretch his legs—which brings us neatly to the second object in the room:*

*It is a girl—clearly an appendage to the bath-tub, only her head and throat—all beautiful girls have throats instead of necks—and a suggestion of shoulder appearing above the side. For the first ten minutes of the play the audience is engrossed in wondering if she really is playing the game fairly and hasn't any clothes on or whether it is being cheated and she is dressed.*

*The girl's name is Julie Marvis. From the proud way she sits up in the bath-tub we deduce that she is not very tall and that she carries herself well. When she smiles, her upper lip rolls a little and reminds you of an Easter Bunny. She is within whispering distance of twenty years old.*

*One thing more—above and to the right of the bath-tub is a window. It is narrow and has a wide sill, it lets in much sun-shine but effectually prevents anyone who looks in from seeing the bath-tub. You begin to suspect the plot?*

*We open, conventionally enough, with a song but, as the startled gasp of the audience quite drowns out the first half, we will give only the last of it:*

JULIE:

(In a light and airy soprano-enthusiastico.)

Then I will dum de dum de dum,  
True as the stars above  
Will we regret? Tum-tum forget—  
So dies my dre-e-eam of love.

(She evidently likes the last line, so she repeats.)

So dies my dre-e-eam of love.

(Some unorganized humming and then another outburst.)

Oh—  
Learn to twist around,  
Or—  
You'll not be missed around;  
No—  
Nor never kissed around here.  
You're an awful spoil-sport:  
You won't play,  
Even on a shimmy-shakers'  
Holiday.

Oh —

Learn to whirl around,

Shake —

A wicked curl around,

Like —

Each little girl around here.

Shiver like a nigger after thirty days

in France;

Quiver like a jelly in a shimmy-shakers' dance.

Never skimp (it's too late)

Learn to limp (*vi-brate!*)

As you blunder blindly, kindly,  
through

The blinking, winking Blimp!

(During the wild applause that follows Julie modestly moves her arms and makes waves on the surface of the water — at least we suppose she does. Then the door on the left opens suddenly and Lois Marvis enters, dressed but carrying garments and towels. Lois is a year older than Julie and is quite her double in face and voice, but in her clothes and expression are the marks of the conservative. Yes, you've guessed it. Mistaken identity is the old, rusty pivot upon which the plot turns.)

LOIS:

(Starting.) Oh, 'scuse me. I didn't know you were here.

JULIE:

Oh, hello. I'm giving a little concert —

LOIS:

(Interrupting.) Why didn't you lock the door?

JULIE:

Didn't I?

LOIS:

Of course you didn't. Do you think I just walked through it?

JULIE:

I thought you picked the lock, dearest.

LOIS:

You're so careless.

JULIE:

Well, I'm giving a little concert.

LOIS:

(Severely.) Grow up!

JULIE:

(Waving a pink arm around the room.) The walls reflect the sound, you see. That's why there's something very beautiful about singing in a bathtub. It gives an effect of surpassing loveliness. Can I render you a selection?

LOIS:

I wish you'd hurry out of the tub.

JULIE:

(Shaking her head thoughtfully.) Can't be hurried. This is my kingdom at present, Godliness.

LOIS:

Why the mellow name?

JULIE:

Because you're next to Cleanliness. Don't throw anything please!

LOIS:

How long will you be?

JULIE:

(After some consideration.) Not less than fifteen nor more than twenty-five minutes.

LOIS:

As a favor to me will you make it ten?

JULIE:

(Reminiscing.) Oh, Godliness, do you remember a day in the chill of last January when one Julie, famous for her Easter-rabbit smile, was going out

and there was scarcely any hot water and young Julie had just filled the tub for her own little self when the wicked sister came and did bathe herself therein, forcing the young Julie to perform her ablutions with cold cream — which is expensive and a darn lot of trouble?

LOIS:

(*Impatiently.*) Then you won't hurry?

JULIE:

Why should I?

LOIS:

I've got a date.

JULIE:

Here at the house?

LOIS:

None of your business.

(*Julie shrugs the visible tips of her shoulders and stirs the water into ripples.*)

JULIE:

So be it.

LOIS:

Oh, for heaven's sake, yes! I have a date here at the house — in a way.

JULIE:

In a way?

LOIS:

He isn't coming in. He's calling for me and we're walking.

JULIE:

(*Raising her eye-brows.*) Oh, the plot clears. It's that literary Mr. Calkins. I thought you promised mother you wouldn't invite him in.

LOIS:

(*Desperately.*) She's so idiotic. She detests him because he's just got a divorce. Of course she's had more experience than I have, but —

JULIE:

(*Wisely.*) Don't let her kid you! Experience is the biggest gold brick in the world. All older people have it for sale.

LOIS:

I like him. We talk literature.

JULIE:

Oh, so that's why I've noticed all these weighty books around the house lately.

LOIS:

He lends them to me.

JULIE:

Well, you've got to play his game. When in Rome do as the Romans would like to do. But I'm through with books. I'm all educated.

LOIS:

You're very inconsistent — last summer you read every day.

JULIE:

If I were consistent I'd still be living on warm milk out of a bottle.

LOIS:

Yes, and probably my bottle. But I don't care; I like Mr. Calkins. You know he's attractive.

JULIE:

I never met him.

LOIS:

Well, will you hurry up?

JULIE:

Yes. (*After a pause.*) I wait till the water gets tepid and then I let in more hot.

LOIS:

(*Sarcastically.*) How interesting!

JULIE:

'Member when we used to play "soapo"?

Lois:

Yes — at ten years old. I'm really quite surprised that you don't play it still.

JULIE:

I do. I'm going to in a minute.

Lois:

Silly game.

JULIE:

(Warmly.) No, it isn't. It's good for the nerves. I'll bet you've forgotten how to play it.

Lois:

(Defiantly.) No, I haven't. You — you get the tub all full of soapsuds and then you get up on the edge and slide down.

JULIE:

(Shaking her head scornfully.) Huh! That's only part of it. You've got to slide down without touching your hands or feet —

Lois:

(Impatiently.) Oh, Lord! What do I care? I wish we'd either stop coming here in the summer or else get a house with two bath-tubs.

JULIE:

You can buy yourself a little tin one, or use the hose —

Lois:

Oh, shut up!

JULIE:

(Irrelevantly.) Leave the towel.

Lois:

What?

JULIE:

Leave the towel when you go.

Lois:

This towel?

JULIE:

(Sweetly.) Yes, I forgot my towel.

Lois:

(Looking around for the first time.) Why, you idiot! You haven't even a kimona.

JULIE:

(Also looking around.) Why, so I haven't.

Lois:

(Suspicion growing on her.) How did you get here?

JULIE:

(Laughing.) I guess I — I guess I whisked here. You know — a white form whisking down the stairs and —

Lois:

(Scandalized.) Why you little wretch. Haven't you any pride or self-respect?

JULIE:

Lots of both. I think that proves it. I looked very well. I really am rather cute without all my spangles on.

Lois:

Well, you —

JULIE:

(Thinking aloud.) I wish people didn't wear any clothes. I guess I ought to have been a pagan or a native or something.

Lois:

You're a —

JULIE:

I dreamt last night that one Sunday in church a small boy brought in a magnet that attracted cloth. He attracted the clothes right off of everybody; put them in an awful state; people were crying and shrieking and carrying on as if they'd just discovered their skins for the first time. Only I didn't care. So I just laughed. I had

to pass the collection plate because nobody else would.

Lois:

(Who has turned a deaf ear to this speech.) Do you mean to tell me that if I hadn't come you'd have run back to your room — un — unclothed?

JULIE:

*Au naturel* is so much nicer.

Lois:

Suppose there had been someone in the living-room.

JULIE:

There never has been yet.

Lois:

Yet! Good grief! How long —

JULIE:

Besides, I usually have a towel.

Lois:

(Completely overcome.) Golly! You ought to be spanked. I hope you get caught. I hope there's a dozen ministers in the living-room when you come out — and their wives and their daughters.

JULIE:

There wouldn't be room for them in the living-room.

Lois:

All right. You've made you own — bath-tub; you can lie in it.

(Lois starts determinedly for the door.)

JULIE:

(In alarm.) Hey! Hey! I don't care about the k'mona but I want the towel. I can't dry myself on a piece of soap and a wet wash-rag.

Lois:

(Obstinately.) I won't humour such a creature. You'll have to dry yourself

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the best way you can. You can roll on the floor like the animals do that don't wear any clothes.

JULIE:

(Complacent again.) All right. Get out!

Lois:

(Haughtily.) Huh!

(Julie turns on the cold water and with her finger direct a parabolic stream at Lois. Lois retires quickly, slamming the door after her. Julie laughs and turns off the water.)

JULIE:

(Singing.)

When the Arrow-collar man  
Meets the D'jer-kiss girl  
On the smokeless Sante Fe  
Her Pebeoco smile  
Her Lucile style  
De dum da-de-dum one day —

(She changes to a whistle and leans forward to turn on the taps, but is startled by three loud banging noises in the pipes. Silence for a moment — then she put her mouth down near the spigot as if it were a telephone.)

JULIE:

Hello! (No answer.) Are you a plumber? (No answer.) Are you the water department? (One loud, hollow bang.) What do you want? (No answer.) I believe you're a ghost. Are you? (No answer.) Well, then, stop banging. (She reaches out and turns on the warm tap. No water flows. She turns on the cold tap. No water flows. Again she puts her mouth down close to the spigot.) If you're the plumber that's a mean trick. Turn it on for a fellow. (Two loud hollow bangs.) Don't argue! I want water — water! Water!

(A young man's head appears in the window — a head decorated with a slim mustache and sympathetic eyes. These last stare, and though they can see nothing but many fishermen with nets

and much crimson ocean, they decide him to speak.)

THE YOUNG MAN:

Some one fainted?

JULIE:

(Starting up, all ears immediately.) Jumping cats!

THE YOUNG MAN:

(Helpfully.) Water's no good for fits.

JULIE:

Fits! Who said anything about fits!

THE YOUNG MAN:

You said something about a cat jumping.

JULIE:

(Decidedly.) I did not!

THE YOUNG MAN:

Well, we can talk it over later. Are you ready to go out? Or do you still feel that if you go with me just now everybody will gossip?

JULIE:

(Smiling.) Gossip! Would they? It'd be more than gossip—it'd be a regular scandal.

THE YOUNG MAN:

Here, you're going it a little strong. Your family might be somewhat disgruntled—but to the pure all things are suggestive. No one else would even give it a thought, except a few old women. Come on.

JULIE:

You don't know what you ask.

THE YOUNG MAN:

Do you imagine we'd have a crowd following us?

JULIE:

A crowd? There'd be a special, all-steel, buffet trains leaving New York hourly.

THE YOUNG MAN:

You do love nonsense. So did I once. I married some of it. Say, are you house-cleaning?

JULIE:

Why?

THE YOUNG MAN:

I see all the pictures are off the walls.

JULIE:

Why, we never have pictures in this room.

THE YOUNG MAN:

Odd. I never heard of a room without pictures or tapestry or paneling or something.

JULIE:

There's not even any furniture in here.

THE YOUNG MAN:

What a strange house!

JULIE:

It depends on the angle you see it from.

THE YOUNG MAN:

(Sentimentally.) It's so nice talking to you like this—when you're merely a voice. I'm rather glad I can't see you.

JULIE:

(Gratefully.) So am I.

THE YOUNG MAN:

What colour are you wearing?

JULIE:

(After a critical survey of her shoulders.) Why, I guess it's a sort of pinkish white.

THE YOUNG MAN:

Is it becoming to you?

JULIE:

Very. It's — its old. I've had it for a long while.

THE YOUNG MAN:

I thought you hated old clothes.

JULIE:

I do — but this was a birthday present and I sort of have to wear it.

THE YOUNG MAN:

Pinkish White. Well, I'll bet it's divine. Is it in style?

JULIE:

Quite. It's very simple, standard model.

THE YOUNG MAN:

What a voice you have! How it echoes! Sometimes I shut my eyes and seem to see you in a far desert island calling for me. And I plunge toward you through the surf hearing you call as you stand there, water stretching on both sides of you —

*(The soap slips from the side of the tub and splashes in. The young man blinks.)*

THE YOUNG MAN:

What was that? Did I dream it?

JULIE:

Yes. You're — you're very poetic, aren't you.

THE YOUNG MAN:

*(Dreamily.)* No. I do prose. I do verse only when I am stirred.

JULIE:

*(Murmuring.)* Stirred by a spoon —

THE YOUNG MAN:

I have always loved poetry. I can remember to this day the first poem I ever learned by heart. It was "Evangeline."

JULIE:

That's a fib.

THE YOUNG MAN:

Did I say "Evangeline?" I meant "The Skeleton in Armor."

JULIE:

I'm a low-brow. But I can remember my first poem. It had one verse:

Parker and Davis  
Sittin' on a fence  
Tryne to make a dollar  
Outa fif-teen cents.

THE YOUNG MAN:

*(Eagerly.)* Are you growing fond of literature?

JULIE:

If it's not too ancient or complicated or depressing. Same way with people. I usually like 'em if they're not too ancient or complicated or depressing.

THE YOUNG MAN:

Of course I've read enormously. You told me last night that you were very fond of Walter Scott.

JULIE:

*(Considering.)* Scott? Let's see. Yes, I've read "Ivanhoe" and "The Last of the Mohicans."

THE YOUNG MAN:

That's by Cooper.

*(Angrily.)* "Ivanhoe" is? You're crazy! I guess I know. I read it.

THE YOUNG MAN:

"The Last of the Mohicans" is by Cooper.

JULIE:

What do I care! I like O. Henry. I don't see how he ever wrote those stories. Most of them he wrote in prison. "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" he made up in prison.

THE YOUNG MAN:

(*Biting his lip.*) Literature—literature—literature! How much it has meant to me!

JULIE:

Well, as Gaby Deslys said to Mr. Bergson, with my looks and your brains there's nothing we couldn't do.

THE YOUNG MAN:

(*Laughing.*) You certainly are hard to keep up with. One day you're awfully pleasant and the next you're in a mood. If I didn't understand your temperament so well—

JULIE:

(*Impatiently.*) Oh, you're one of these amateur character readers, are you? Size people up in five minutes and then look wise whenever they're mentioned. I hate that sort of thing.

THE YOUNG MAN:

I don't boast of sizing you up. You're most mysterious, I'll admit.

JULIE:

Rot! There's only three mysterious people in history.

THE YOUNG MAN:

Who are they?

JULIE:

The man with the Iron Mask, Dr. Frank Crane and the fella who says "ug uh-glug uh-glug uh-glug" when the line is busy.

THE YOUNG MAN:

You *are* mysterious. I love you. You're beautiful, intelligent and virtuous and that's the rarest known combination.

JULIE:

You're a historian. Tell me if there are any bath-tubs in history. I think they've been frightfully neglected.

THE YOUNG MAN:

Bath-tubs! Let's see. Well, Agamemnon was stabbed in his bath-tub. And Charlotte Corday stabbed Marat in his bath-tub.

JULIE:

(*Sighing.*) Way back there! Nothing new besides the sun, is there? Why only yesterday I picked up a musical-comedy score that must have been at least twenty years old; and there on the cover it said "The Shimmies of Normandy," but shimmie was spelt the old way, with a "C."

THE YOUNG MAN:

I loathe these modern dances. Oh, Lois, I wish I could see you. Come to the window.

(*There is a loud bang in the water-pipe and suddenly the flow starts from the open taps. Julie turns them off quickly.*)

THE YOUNG MAN:

(*Puzzled.*) What on earth was that?

JULIE:

(*Ingeniously.*) I heard something, too.

THE YOUNG MAN:

Sounded like running water.

JULIE:

Didn't it? Strange like it. As a matter of fact I was filling the gold-fish bowl.

THE YOUNG MAN:

(*Still puzzled.*) What was that banging noise?

JULIE:

One of the fish snapping his golden jaws.

THE YOUNG MAN:

(*With sudden resolution.*) Lois, I love you. I am not a mundane man but I am a forger—

JULIE:

(Interested at once.) Oh, how fascinating.

THE YOUNG MAN:

— a forger ahead. Lois, I want you.

JULIE:

(Skeptically.) Huh! What you really want is for the world to come to attention and stand there till you give "Rest!"

THE YOUNG MAN:

Lois I — Lois I —

(He stops as Lois suddenly opens the door, comes in and bangs it behind her. She looks peevishly at Julie and then suddenly catches sight of the young man in the window.)

LOIS:

(In horror.) Mr. Calkins!

THE YOUNG MAN:

(Surprised.) Why I thought you said you were wearing pinkish white!

(After one despairing stare Lois shrieks, throws up her hands in surrender and sinks to the floor.)

THE YOUNG MAN:

(In great alarm.) Good Lord! She's fainted! I'll be right in.

(Julie's eyes light on the towel which has slipped from Lois's inert hand.)

JULIE:

In that case I'll be right out.

(She put her hands on the side of the tub to lift herself out and a murmur, half gasp, half sigh, ripples from the audience.

A Belasco midnight comes quickly down and blots out the stage.)

CURTAIN.



## Take My Love

By Arthur Edison

TAKE my love and make of it  
What upon your heart is writ.

Shape it in your lovely way;  
Mold it to the tunes of day;

To the rustling of the rushes;  
To the piping of the thrushes;

To the chirping of the crickets  
In the tangled, reedy thickets;

To the droning of the bees—  
Shape, oh shape my love to these.

But to guard it 'gainst the morrow,  
Salt it well with tears of sorrow

Lest the pain of parting be  
Fiercer than my love for thee!

# I Am Lonesome

*By June Gibson*

I AM lonesome.

\* \* \* \*

When I am bad, people pass me without recognition on the Avenue.  
When I am good, they yawn and find a pretext for leaving me.  
When I am clever, they eye me suspiciously and linger but briefly.  
When I am modest and shy, they deem me stupid and depart.

\* \* \* \*

I am lonesome.



# Treasure

*By Hortense Flexner*

THE little pilfering hands of hours and days,  
    Bury much loveliness and treasured gold,  
Savour and essence, cloud and warm scent and haze,  
    Small things accustomed, all too frail to hold.  
But I would have remembrance full and keen,  
    Nor yield one leaf or stone, one shadow's blue,  
One little thrusting wind, one hill's tall green;  
    The outer ways of wonder that we knew.

The fear grows with me that I shall forget—  
    Never your love, but half seen things of grace,  
Beauty we freely took and marvelling, set  
    Away, too blindly, knowing not its place;  
This wealth put by, this gold too faint and rare,  
    I can not count and yet I can not spare.



A WOMAN seldom believes her husband is lying more than four times out of five. The fifth time she is merely suspicious.

# The Perfume Counter

*By Thyra Samter Winslow*

## I

TO the post-man, the grocers' clerks, neighbours and others necessarily aware of her existence, Meta Burkner was a pretty, quiet, pleasant girl—"one of the Burkners." And the Burkners were respectable, decent enough, "one of the families at 930 Ellison Street." Ellison Street, in New York's upper East Side, was a small canyon of unnoticeable, fire-escaped apartment houses, "walk-ups" as distinguished from the more costly and stylish "elevator apartments" of choicer neighbourhoods and but a step removed from the less sanitary and more maligned tenements.

Meta knew that she did not fit well into her neighbourhood. She was not especially proud of the knowledge nor of her difference. It made her too much apart, with no corresponding rewards. Her subtleties of feelings and emotions, if recognized, would have met with sneers and sarcasm instead of sympathy.

When she was six, Meta noticed for the first time that there must be something about her that wasn't like other children. A Mrs. Fellman, a bustling, black-clad neighbour, came into the Burkner apartment for a chat about homely affairs.

She drew Meta toward her in a spirit of friendliness, with a comfortable "how's the little girl to-day?" Meta howled. With doubled fists she fought her way to freedom. All remarks about "go to the nice lady" and "is that the way you treat Mrs. Fellman when she comes to see us?" met with a wail

of defiance. Meta, in one corner, finger in mouth, glared at the intruder and would not allow herself to be petted.

After the neighbour had gone, Mrs. Burkner turned to her recalcitrant daughter,

"What's the matter with you?" she asked. "Why did you act so bad when Mrs. Fellman wanted you should sit in her lap?"

"Fish," said Meta from her corner.

"Fish? What do you mean?"

"She had 'em on her. I smelled 'em."

"Nonsense, she didn't have any fish. How can you talk like that?"

Meta would give no further information. And Mrs. Burkner, remembering the temperament of her own youth, that, persisting in spite of poverty, had caused her to name her oldest child Millicent and her youngest Meta, instead of the more usual Annie or Mary, put it down as Meta's "disposition." But it came to Meta, then, that other people didn't notice, or at least didn't mind, smells the way she did. And that, anyhow, smells weren't things folks would talk about with you.

Jim, who was two years older, brought home, a few months later, the next bit of evidence against her.

Meta's getting funny at school—the Murphy boy told me. He heard Miss Longan say so. She wouldn't sit in back of Tommy Rollins and cried because she was next to Mary Baillie's little sister."

"Not nice. Onions," volunteered Meta.

She didn't see why a dislike of onions on the clothing of her associates should

mark her out. How could other people stand them? How could others sniff inquiringly at escaping sewer gas or yesterday's cat and then stay to investigate more closely? But other people did. Meta could only look at them and wonder.

As Meta grew older, she became more aware of her peculiarity. She found it was something to be ashamed of, to exercise in secret. If you express even the faintest dislike of an odour others will laugh at you, she found. If you show the semblance of joy at a fragrance, the laughter will turn into derision.

To be sure, Mrs. Fellman and her neighbour successors, who persisted in wearing unwashed black in summer and carrying home the family supplies, learned that Meta was a bad little girl who would scratch if you tried to be friendly. They put that down as bad temper, a familiar enough trait in Ellison Street. Boys and girls learned that Meta Burkner, after a funny little sniff, would, at times, leave them strangely alone.

But, after varied fights, vocal and fistic, Meta learned to control her emotions, outwardly at least. She could meet half a dozen unpleasant smells, in the course of a day, and only a slight shudder, an almost imperceptible cringing, would betray her. And, though gradually her sense of smell grew more keen and more important to her, one could scarcely notice, from the way she acted when she came in contact with them, that Meta was interested in odours at all.

Even Meta's family, who for a long time had treated her with suspicion, finally got over the idea that she was a "queer one" and gave her the respect that a family always gives its prettiest member.

## II

FOR Meta was pretty. Even the neighbours, slightly puzzled over the "something funny about her," admitted that. When she was seventeen she was

slender, with the sort of swaying, fragile quality that is as often the result of poor housing and incorrect food as of generations of good breeding. Her complexion, inclined to paleness, was very smooth, of a peculiar satiny smoothness that even cheap face-power and liberal rouge could not hide. Her hair was a light, colourless brown and her eyes hazel, but her lashes and brows were well shaped and darker than her hair. Her nose was slender, slightly upturned, with small, rather rounded nostrils. Her mouth was freshly red.

Meta, outwardly normal and quiet and a bit shy, was in most ways a typical product of her neighbourhood. She spent her evenings chatting on the street with boys and girls of her own age, going to moving picture shows, eating innumerable brilliantly coloured sodas and sundaes, of which she knew dozens of varieties by name. She wore clothes of slingly material, cut in what she considered smart lines, extreme, showy—and she wore them rather well, with a swagger of her slender body.

Meta stopped school, at fifteen, after one year at "High." She could have kept on going had she cared to, for her father, brother and sister were working, but she didn't like to study. The preparation of lessons, the little rules, annoyed her. After she stopped, she helped her mother a little around the house—the long, cave-like section of 930 Ellison Street that belonged temporarily to them—a front living room, which one member of the family used as a bed-room, the long dark hall, always half illumined with a swaying gas jet, the little bed-rooms, one of which Meta shared with Millie, the court-lift dining room, the grey kitchen.

Meta hated the apartment. She hated housework because she disliked routine, disliked doing tiresome things—but mostly because of the smells accompanying it; bed clothes to be changed, worn underthings to be assorted and washed, an always musty hallway to be swept, men's clothes, reeking of cheap tobacco and food, to be hung up, work in a

kitchen full of a steamy thickness, a boiling pot, the frying of steak and onions. But Meta did housework because she had no ambition to do anything else. She'd hurry through it, half anaesthetizing herself until she could finish, so that she could dress up and run out into the open air.

The air of the neighbourhood was nearly as bad, odours of a thousand households mingling, but, when it was cold, she didn't mind it so much and, when it was warm, she'd walk over to a little neighbourhood park or to the East River, where even the eternally fishy smell of the ocean seemed better.

Meta's sense of smell was not the usual animal sense that marks people. It was more than that. Life had pushed Meta into a place of unpleasant odours and she didn't know what to do about it. For life drifted to her quite as much through her nostrils as through her eyes and ears.

Not all things, of course, nor all of the usual things she came in contact with, were unpleasant to her. She was no judge of odours. Authorities would have laughed at her. She loved flowers but not all of them. For a change, she liked to sniff in a florist's shop. It seemed, wonderful, to transport her to a pleasanter existence. But, after a few minutes she grew tired of it; the cool pungency became too heavy. And white roses were as unpleasant to her as an unaired bed-room or boiling molasses. She loved some pine trees she had smelled on a day's outing up the Hudson. She loved the smell of new puppies, of new earth, of wet paint, of wet leather, of freshly ironed, warm linen and of some things in her mother's kitchen—certain kinds of coffee, raspberry jelly, occasionally, roasting meats. She hated people who needed bathing, shut-up rooms, the dozens of street smells that go with poverty and cheap living.

She passed an Italian pastry shop, once, and smelled, along with the other pleasant odours, something wonderful, magnificent. Loitering in the door-

way, she asked what it was. The old woman in charge of the shop invited her into the back room, a kitchen, and said that they were making salted almonds, frying the almonds in olive oil. Meta inhaled, her eyes half closed. She felt as if someone had given her a present. Yet, usually, Meta pretended that odours meant nothing to her—that she was like all of the other girls and boys she knew.

### III

META "went with" Billy Leary. She had started going with him the year before, when she was sixteen. He lived only a few blocks from her home and was always a ready escort. Billy was twenty-one and had a position as packer in a wholesale clothing-house. He thought they ought to get married and settle down—he'd already saved enough money to furnish a flat.

Billy was willing to marry Billy. She was really fond of him, in love, in fact. He was better looking than most of the boys she knew, a ruddy-faced, short, stocky fellow, with a good-natured smile. She was quite pleased with him even if he did not fit into the ideals of a hero which the printed page had given her—Meta's reading was confined to the *Journal* at night, the *American* in the morning and magazines slightly more fictional by the same publisher. Meta didn't expect that.

She was satisfied, usually, with Billy. She liked him well enough to snuggle up close to him, at the movies, to touch, unbidden, his rather fat, ruddy hand. She felt delightful little thrills when he kissed her good-night, in the dark hallway, when he brought her home. Yes, she loved Billy, was quite willing to marry him—yet, she put him off, when he proposed immediate marriage—she was too young—an unusual excuse in her neighbourhood.

It was smells, of course. She thought of it as her own queerness, but the queerness was there all the time,

underneath the pretended indifference, as definite as when she was six and far more developed. And Billy, when he kissed her, brushed her cheek with his coat sleeve, which was musty with the mustiness of poor ventilation and dampness and lack of cleaning. And Billy's hair smelled sometimes of cheap hair tonics, sometimes of the barber's unpleasant lotions . . . Billy smoked cheap cigarettes and cigars made from the clippings of rank tobacco and the odours of them formed an unpleasant aura around him. Of course, she could get used to it—it was no worse than she was accustomed to—her own family, her father, her brother. She shuddered.

Meta tried, even, to get Billy to see how she felt about things. He'd be pleasant, laughing, companionable, until she mentioned a scent or an odour. Then he'd look at her peculiarly and change the subject, or, pinching her arm, gently say, "You're a funny one!"

She found that the best way was to ignore all smells when she could, to pretend that this one sense did not exist at all.

She wondered if anyone else felt as she did. She groped about, sometimes, when she met new people, trying to find one, anyone—but people were not interested in odours.

#### IV

MILLIE, christened Millicent, Meta's sister, married when Meta was eighteen. She married Fred Davis and started housekeeping and Meta had the bed-room all to herself. But she had less money, as had all of the family. Millie had been working as a saleswoman of coats and suits in a speciality shop in Thirty-fourth Street and brought home rather good wages. She had contributed to the up-keep of the home and had paid for most of Meta's clothes. Now, with Millie married, this income ceased and it was decided that Meta must find a position down-town.

The shop where Millie had been em-

ployed did not take inexperienced girls, except as cash girls, a position Meta felt was far below her. She didn't care much about selling suits, anyhow. It took too much flattery and cleverness to make a sale. Most positions were closed to Meta, for she didn't want to spend a year or two in training and she had no ambition. So she applied for a position at one of the larger department stores, a store of the "better sort," whose chatty advertisements always seemed particularly "classy" to her. After some questioning she was finally accepted and put to selling ribbons.

Meta didn't like the ribbon counter but she was too indolent to ask for a change. So she stood there all day, chatting to the girl next to her or measuring ribbons, blue, green, orange, endless layers, with a bored indifference. After all, in a year or two she'd probably marry Billy—he kept worrying her about it, didn't like to have her work down-town.

The perfume counter was thrust upon Meta. She had thought of it, vaguely, as all clean glass and delicate colours, a pleasant place at which to linger, to inhale deeply of its stores, but her sense of smell had been so long something to thrust back, to make little of, that it never occurred to her that she might work where things always smelled pleasantly. There was a sale, now, so Meta and two other girls were transferred from the less busy counters.

Meta spent her first day very happily at the perfume counter sniffing at delightful odours. She did not differentiate very closely between them. They were nearly all lovely, fine smells. She'd lift the glass stopper of a huge bottle of toilet water—and smell; lift the cover of a box of sachet—and smell—life suddenly became something very lovely indeed.

On the way home it occurred to Meta for the first time that there were people who spent all of their days among delightful odours, who even acknowledged to other people that they liked

pleasant smells, who developed, without shame, this sense that she had been almost afraid to acknowledge. She ate dinner in half a dream, hardly realizing what she ate. She went to the movies with Billy and forgot, minutes at a time, to watch the pictures. It was as if the world suddenly had changed for her, as if she were on the eve of a great event. And yet she knew that she had known all the time about the perfume counter. She didn't try to understand it.

Meta stayed at the perfume counter for a week, selling cheap extract and sachets and toilet waters. She enjoyed them a great deal, made comparisons between them, sprinkled drops of them on her handkerchief or the front of her blouse. She forgot to be bored or indifferent.

She noticed the other girls at the perfume counter. They seemed peculiarly clean and wholesome—they had "class," Meta admitted to herself. Perhaps it was because they smelled such pleasant things all day. Yet, she knew that the girls took the perfume and the sachet as a matter of course. They would discuss smells with far more freedom than her family. They didn't think it odd that she should have decided fondness for certain scents. They appreciated, in a way, her love of fragrance, but, to them, it was all "part of the day's work," more pleasant than the lace counter, less tiresome than the notions.

When Meta was put back to selling ribbons again, she felt as if something had gone out, as if, in a way, she was blinded.

She knew she couldn't go on at the ribbon counter much longer. She asked for a transfer, finally, to the perfumes, with a curious trembling.

It seemed impossible that anyone could bestow so great a gift carelessly. Yet, because she was pretty—they try to get attractive, fresh-looking girls at the counters which display perfumes, cosmetics and candy—her request was granted freely enough.

## V

AFTER the first week or two of ecstasy, Meta settled down more calmly about her new work. Her life became divided even more markedly between the store and her outside activity. Before this, she had waited eagerly for the store to close, glancing frequently at the store clock or at her cheap wrist watch, always ten minutes too fast. Now, she was not so eager. She hated the routine of the shop, the long hours, the ceaseless waiting on trade, but now business hours brought pleasant smells; home brought only the foulness and the mustiness of cheap living.

At first, all of the odours but white rose seemed pleasant enough to Meta, a wonderful bouquet. The popular perfumes appealed to her, especially, when she first came to the counter. They were the ones she had always been used to, the ones her friends bought. She had never thought of questioning their excellence.

After a few weeks, she found that the cheapest extracts began to be as distasteful to her as unaired rooms had always been. They became strong, almost coarse. She noticed that they were purchased mostly by shop girls and factory girls and married women of small means who wore cheap lace waists and hats trimmed in bobbing "feather fancies." So Meta carefully avoided Jockey Club and the poorer grades of lotus flower and lilac when she smelled perfumes. Some makes of violet became definitely distasteful to her. Soon she could tell by looking at a customer if she would order heliotrope or sweet pea or white rose.

Then, gradually, the perfumes a bit higher in price, especially those of oriental tendency that a few months before had seemed fine and rich, became offensively heavy. Their bouquet suggested cheap rouge, stiffly marcelled hair, bad corsetting, dark clothes usually in need of cleaning.

Meta's taste in other things changed a little, too. Because she noticed that

it was the much-rouged girl with the frizzed hair who bought lilac and Jockey Club and Jassamine, and the cheaply jewelled woman with hard lines and circles under her eyes and overtrimmed hats who used Oriental scents, sandalwood or wisteria, Meta's hair became glossier and smoother, and omitted numerous plated pins and chains that she had thought added a pretty touch to her costume.

She started taking great care of her room now, getting it as well ventilated as she could and using more clean linen than the family thought necessary. She washed out her waists at night, so as to have them fresh and clean, bathed more than she dared confess to any of her friends and took care of her nails and hair.

She spent her evenings much as she had always; the movies, walks, dances, "the crowd." She saw, although she didn't like to see, that all of the girls she went with used just the perfumes that were becoming so distasteful to her. The men reeked, as always, of cheap domestic tobacco, of hair lotions. Yet—she loved Billy. He was a dear, the way his hair grew on his forehead, his friendly nose and mouth, his smile, his kindly eyes. Life with Billy would be pleasant—Billy would always make a good living—he was a dear boy, so gentle and sweet and thoughtful about things, constantly trying to please her. She could marry Billy—marry and settle down and have a little home—and accept the smells of the neighbourhood, of cheap cooking—and the burning fats that accompanied it.

Meta didn't have time to think of Billy during the day. Her home, Billy, "the crowd," all disappeared behind an aromatic barricade.

Now, Meta preferred the better class of domestic perfumes. She could afford small bottles of them and used them at home, sprinkled sparingly, a "decoration" for her plain little room. She liked Melba for a while, especially "Love Me," but grew tired of it, and then of Mary Garden, and went to Col-

gate. The name of Colgate at one time, stood for supremacy in perfume to Meta. She tried the varieties, one at a time, liked them for a little while, and then proceeded to others. Hundenut's perfumes then seemed to her to be a little more fragrant, a bit more subtle. But she grew tired of these, too, and liked, for a few weeks, Corylopsis, deserting it only when it grew too much like the oriental odours which she had long before found disagreeable to her.

Then Meta moved up the counter a little way to the more expensive perfumes. She waited a little less readily on the woman who came in to buy lily of the valley and sweet pea. For, now, Meta was beginning to like the better class of "popular" scents. They were the perfumes purchased by the well-to-do people, people who lived in far better surroundings than Meta, not rich, but who went to the matinée on Wednesdays and Saturdays and who did nothing very useful the rest of the time. They represented an affluence that Meta's family had never attained.

Meta wondered, now, how she had ever liked cheaper perfumes. She was getting fourteen dollars a week, but could easily afford the scents she liked, if she used them carefully. She found Roger and Gallet delicious, especially the violet which, in cheaper perfumes, had seemed a parody on the real flower. When she grew tired of this she used Kerkoff's Djer-Kiss, which seemed lighter, but when it lost its allure she switched to Piver and used, in turn, Flora May, Azurea and Pompeia. She felt quite proud because she liked "imported perfumes" and looked down on those made in her own country.

Then she found Ambre Royal and was proud to pronounce the maker's name, quite distinctly ve-o-lay, though spelled, innocently, Violet. She liked knowing that. She liked the perfume, too, not because it cost three dollars an ounce, without the

war tax, but because it seemed deeper and more exquisite than others she had known.

But Meta grew tired of Ambre Royal in a little while. These scents, even though imported, were after all still "popular." There were other perfumes that were far more expensive, but the particular store for which Meta worked carried these other perfumes only in small sealed bottles, instead of in bulk as they carried the less expensive ones. So Meta did not have the opportunity of applying them during business hours.

## VI

At first, the better perfumes had not seemed especially fragrant to Meta. Only their cost had attracted her. Now, coming upon them again in her sales she found a beauty to them she had never experienced, something that tugged at her feelings, as lovely colours might have done. She bought a small bottle of Dorsy's Chevalier one day, and for weeks life seemed pleasanter.

She would hurry home, eat dinner as fast as she could, help with the dishes in a sort of a quick rage, refuse to go to the movies with Billy, and, alone in her room, undress, climb on the uneven little bed with a magazine and her perfume. She'd pour drops of the perfume on her gown, her forehead, her hair, on her hands, and inhale deeply. The ugly things, the smells of grease from the kitchen, the stale smells of the street, seemed almost to fade away. She bought Morny's Chaminade then, and later smelled alternately at the two nearly empty bottles trying to decide which she liked the better. But she bought somebody's Rose Bonbon and didn't like it at all and almost wept at the waste of money—she needed so many other things more.

She liked Grenoville's Bluet, but had never dared buy it. After all, perfume at eight dollars an ounce,

when you are only getting fourteen for a whole week's work, is rather high. But she wanted it a great deal. Perfume meant infinitely more than gloves or shoes, things like that. She bought an ounce of it, finally, and, when it was gone, her plain room seemed strangely empty. She bought an ounce bottle of Houbigant's Ideal, then—she had long ago discarded Duval's Fleurs because it smelled too much of white rose. She enjoyed the Ideal vastly.

Then, quite as suddenly as she had been put at the perfume counter, Meta discovered Coty's Ambre Antique. She had known of Coty's perfumes before and had liked L'Origan and Styx, but the store had been out of Ambre Antique. When a shipment arrived, Meta seized a bottle of it as if she had known about it and hungered for it for a long time. It seemed to answer some definite need, to soothe her as no scent had ever done. It seemed to blot out all of the ugly things that home meant, escaping gas, cheap food, damp clothing. She smelled of a bottle of it all day when she could—you can get quite a lot of scent from a sealed bottle of perfume, after you are trained to it—you shake the bottle thoroughly, so that the perfume goes well up to the ground glass stopper, and smell.

Ambre Antique was, to Meta, the final perfume. It was not the cost of it, though it happened to be one of the most expensive perfumes that was being brought to America just then. It was not as expensive as some of the "personal" perfumes, concocted by queer young chemists to suit certain definite personalities, but which, to Meta, seemed crude and amateurish. Ambre Antique had a cool depth, an illusive quality that seemed to grow more lovely all of the time.

Meta waited several weeks before buying it. She could so little afford it. Then it seemed as if nothing else mattered but smells, that she must

have some of it at home. When she finally bought an ounce, golden in its square-cornered bottle in its plain tan box, and opened it in her small, ugly room, she forgot the cabbages and onions of the neighbourhood more completely than she had ever forgotten them before and was very happy.

Meta was quite shabbily dressed. Buying perfumes and "helping at home" did not allow a great deal for clothes. Besides, Meta had reached the point where she hated cheap clothes; they were related too closely to cheap odours. Even the middle grades, decent things of a year ago that had seemed so fine to her, now were definitely placed—nice enough in their way, but not her kind at all. Her people—the people who bought Ambre Antique, there was something different about them—some of them were actresses and bought it because it was expensive; they didn't count, really—but there were others, in correct, rather rough morning things for shopping or soft, swishy afternoon clothes—they bought Ambre Antique because they loved it—she could see how they caressed the bottle when she handed it to them—they were her people. They spoke in carefully cultivated, and, to Meta, slightly affected accents. They disregarded her entirely, didn't know she was alive nor that she, too, loved Ambre Antique. Yet Meta felt that she was one of them. What did clothes matter?

Scents, to Meta, became more and more of an obsession. She grew to judge people almost through the sense of smell. She was quite as much a slave to perfume as if it were opium or alcohol. In the subway, going to work in the morning, she would move, constantly, so as not to be too near people too carelessly washed. Their presence was a real torture to her. She waited for half an hour in the evening in order to get a seat on top of a bus where even the smell of gasoline was far preferable to the smell of the subway. Her

people—Aubre Antique people—rode in limousines, she knew that. Yet, the top of the bus was all right—things aren't so bad in the open air.

Then Meta found out that she needed new shoes, actually must have them and that her plain little suit was so shabby that she couldn't wear it to business much longer.

Her mother, who, a few years before, had scolded her for "putting every cent on her back" and who now, definitely, decided that she was "a queer one, not like other girls," commanded that she get a suit at once. It could be charged and paid for in a month or two. Even Billy, who in spite of Meta's frequent refusals of his invitations, was still faithful and devoted, looked questionably at Meta's clothes. It never occurred to him how Meta spent her money or that he might ask about it, but he wanted her to look nice—like other girls.

So Meta bought a suit, a rather rough-finished tweed Norfolk in dark gray and a velour hat that pulled down over her hair, and new shoes. She felt satisfied with her new clothes—they weren't what her mother wanted her to get—but she might be anyone at all, just out of a limousine, shopping for Ambre Antique.

## VII

BUT—there was no money for Ambre Antique. For a week or two Meta pretended not to mind. She spent the evenings with Billy or with the crowd, coming home late, and tried to go right to sleep. Some nights she couldn't fall asleep easily. She'd smell the empty bottle, over which a fragrance still lingered. She'd take out a whole pile of empty bottles—that had held various kinds of perfume—from one of her dresser drawers and smelled at them in turn, comparing them, enjoying each of them, but always coming back to Ambre Antique. And, as the bot-

tle, which had held her favourite scent retained less and less of its former odour, Meta grew more and more fond of it. The fondness became a definite, gnawing hunger. She suffered almost physical pain because her room no longer held the fragrance. She clenched her fists in an agony of wanting it.

One day Meta was alone for a few minutes at the counter. She had come back early from her lunch hour; it was Spring and the city streets and the cheap lunch places were more distasteful than the store. She fingered the little bottles of Ambre Antique, fingered them caressingly, hungrily. In a minute, then, she had slipped one of the bottles into her purse. When she snapped her purse closed she did not feel the guilt she knew she ought to have felt, just a sort of glad surge of relief.

Of course, sometimes, they search your purse at night when you leave the store—it was a little bottle, she'd take a chance.

She thought, then, of transferring the perfume to a cheaper bottle, but there was always the risk of spilling some, of the bottle retaining some bit of the perfume it had held before and ruining the pure fragrance of the perfume she loved.

She reached home safely with the bottle and spent the evening transported to a realm of happiness which seemed to soothe her and lift her out of the little troubles of the day. She should have been sorry—she knew that—why, she'd stolen the perfume—was a thief, taking something that didn't belong to her. Yet, there was only a dull thankfulness that she had not been found out—and that she had the perfume.

For a few days Meta worried a little over the theft, though for some reason it did not seem the same as if she had stolen other things—a piece of jewelry or a purse, for instance. Perfume was something that seemed to belong so definitely to her, that

seemed her right to own. Yet, if she were found out? Whenever the buyer of her department or the assistant buyer or the floorwalker glanced at the sparkling glass shelves or at her, she trembled. She must have perfume—she knew that—and she couldn't afford to buy it—and yet—if she were found out—

The fear of being found out lessened as the days passed. A month later Metal stole a second bottle of Ambre Antique. But she took it with the feeling that this theft was final—there were only a few bottles left in stock—she knew she dare not take any more. She still owed money on her clothes—she needed other things—there was no money to buy perfume. . .

## VIII

THE day after Meta took the second bottle, Gardiner Mallery came to Meta's counter. It was a rainy, warm day and Meta did not feel like waiting on customers, but none of the other salesgirls did either, seemingly, so she found herself taking Mallery's order. He was an old man, lean, with stooped shoulders and hundreds of little wrinkles around his mouth and eyes. He was a dapperly-dressed old man with clothes far removed from the "classy" Broadway cut that, a year or two before, Meta had thought so stylish. Meta didn't notice him very closely—she never paid much attention to men—she cared more for Billy than she could for anyone else—and this man was old—but Mallery ordered Ambre Antique.

"It's very lovely, isn't it?" she ventured.

So few men knew anything about perfumes—and to find an old man who knew anything at all about them—though he was probably buying it for his wife—

"You like it?" a look of interest, of life, came into Mallery's rather faded eyes.

"Yes, it's my favorite."

Mallery showed his surprise. A young girl—and good looking, who seemed to know something about scents.

"You like all perfumes?" he asked.

"No, not any more. I used to, when I first came here. Now I don't like many of them, not many scents at all."

"Since you're here at the counter, I suppose? How long have you been here?"

Before she realized it, Meta was telling him about her likes and hates in smells, how she had always cared about odours, and he was nodding and adding experiences of his own, naming things that appealed especially to him.

Mallery had spent most of his life catering to his senses. He did it consciously and deliberately. It seemed the pleasantest thing to do. He had been a good business man in his youth, not the idler he seemed now. He had been able, by crafty methods, to quadruple the money his father had left him.

Having no especial talent along artistic lines, he had pampered himself generally, picking from life only the pleasant things. He prided himself on his ability to know people, on his knowledge of foods and drinks, on his cleverness as an amateur music and art critic, but, most of all, on the development of his sense of smell.

It was really an obsession with him, too, though he pretended that it was just a fad. He did not use perfumes on his own clothing, of course, but he used them, carefully blended, in his home, to express different moods, different sentiments. He gave perfumes to his friends, trying various little tricks on them, to test their sense of smell.

Now, to find a girl in a department store who could talk sensibly about scents—who really seemed to understand things, surprised Mallery. He weighed things rather hurriedly—he

was not the sort who makes promiscuous acquaintances—and ended by inviting Meta to have dinner with him the following evening.

Meta was not in the habit of accepting invitations from strangers. She refused with the hauteur she thought an heiress would assume, the invitations of "fresh guys" who approached the counter or met her on the street as she was leaving the store. She knew this was different. Here was a man who understood perfumes, odours, who didn't think the sense of smell was something to be disregarded, avoided—why, he was her sort, he bought Ambre Antique. She accepted the invitation.

Meta was glad, the next evening, that her mother had made her buy new clothes and that they harmonized, in a way, with her sense of smell. They were not evening things, of course—but she shuddered at the thought of the clothes she would have been wearing even a year ago.

Mallery met her at the store, at six. She climbed into his motor with no definite idea of the luxury of it outside of a certain sense-soothing satisfaction. Mallery was just an old man and she didn't like him. But she did like his ideas on smells, the freedom of discussion of scents and odours that being with him gave her. He knew so much more about the sense of smell than she did—than anyone she had ever known—he had studied it—would talk to her. . .

The dinner was the first good meal that Meta had ever eaten. She had expected a big restaurant, the kind she passed frequently on Broadway, bewilderingly full of lights and music and noise. Mallery took her to a quiet Japanese restaurant on a side street, where they were the only Americans, where young Japanese boys in native costumes brought lacquered trays and tea. There was a sweetmeat, first, with a strange tang—the only oriental food Meta had ever tasted was chop suey, things like that, in gaudy, ill-

smelling Chinese restaurants—and she had not dared to hope for anything like this. Then came soup, and Meta learned to drink it, correctly, from the bowl, and to hold her chopsticks so as to get the morsels of fish. It was good, but the smell—lemony, pungent, was the best of all. Fried shrimps, each in a crisp brown batter, served on rice with a pleasant smelling sauce followed. Then came chicken and vegetables, cooked on the table in a brazier and from the cooking rose the odour of a dozen spices. Then a cooling salad that looked like a tiny Japanese garden and, last, twisted rice cakes. It was a splendid dinner. When she sniffed the savoury, new odours and talked with Mallory about them and learned of new smells and new tastes, he didn't seem so old and unpleasant, after all.

A week later, Meta had dinner with Mallory again, at an American restaurant, this time, but even here he did not neglect to select pleasant-smelling foods, a strange contrast to the greasy things served in Ellison Street.

Before she realized it, Meta found that she was dining with Mallory frequently and that each meal brought new pleasures, new and rare odours, soft, comforting surroundings. And, each day, as she went home, Ellison Street seemed a little fouler, a little less clean.

She knew that Mallory liked her only because she was a sort of experiment—and because she was young and pretty—something he had said showed that he felt he was renewing his own youth through her. He was old—but there were so many pleasant things he could give her—things she could get in no other way.

## IX

ONE day Mallory took Meta to his home to dinner. Although they were alone save for the servants—and she had neglected to tell her mother of the arrangement—it did not seem improper

to her and it was not, as the conversation had to be almost entirely with the senses of smell and taste.

Mallery lived in a narrow, gloomy-looking house in the East Seventies. In it were treasures he had spent years in collecting; old Spanish tables, bits of Renaissance brocade, Flemish tapestries, French enamels, antique Chinese rugs faded through the years to soft golds and blue-green.

Meta only half-perceived these things. Her sense of colour and form were undeveloped, though she felt that the things were good and that she could learn to like them. But the odours that Mallory's house presented to her were understandable enough; Oriental incenses more subtle than any she had smelled before, aromatic perfumes she had never heard of, Arabic extracts, a dried plant that grew in East India, fragrant resins, a preparation from the rind of an orange that yields bergamot, odd sachets and potpourris and woods and spices. Meta felt as if she were entering a new part of life, as if she were infinitely more awake, and alive with new emotions.

A few weeks later, at dinner, Mallory asked Meta to marry him. Then it came to her that he was just an old man, an unpleasant old man, with bony fingers, and that under his chin the skin hung in loose folds. There were dark pouches under his eyes—he reminded her of a dead baby bird she had seen once, fallen from its nest, in Central Park. His hair was thin and grey and his nose drooping and unpleasant. And sometimes he was sarcastic and sharp—old.

There was Billy—she loved Billy. He was ruddy and young and strong. Her pulse beat when he kissed her and there was a pleasant tingling when he held her in his arms. Yet—Billy meant cheap tobacco and cheap living and cheap smells. She couldn't talk with Billy about smells, even. Billy was fine—no question about that. She loved Billy—Billy—and a little apartment—a little home—the two of them—

"I'll tell you to-morrow," said Meta. "Must I call for you at the store?" Mallery had asked, then. "It humiliates me to think I must meet you there, the way I do. I don't like to think of you being there."

"Well, I won't go to-morrow, anyhow. I'll—I'll write you a note to-morrow, perhaps to-morrow morning."

All that night Meta thought about it. It was such a little problem. She loved Billy. She didn't love anyone else. Billy wanted her to marry him right away. What was there to puzzle over?

## X

It was a warm night and she couldn't get to sleep. She opened her window and the screen was broken and the flies buzzed in. The smells came up from the street and the narrow court, a dozen smells—animals, people, cheap food, burnt bacon, an open garbage pail. Mallery understood smells. He was so dreadfully sensitive about them—smoked only a certain tobacco, she had learned—a leaf of especial fragrance grown in small quantities in certain parts of the Province of Cavalla. He lived in a whole house full of pleasant smells. There needn't be any more of these awful smells, these malodorous nights.

And the days, too—the perfume counter was pleasant-smelling enough—but the constant waiting on people—and the lunch hour. She hadn't been able to eat lunch lately. The lunch rooms she could afford were stifling and noisy and the odours of cooking and the food itself nauseated her. She couldn't go on this way—why, she couldn't even steal any more perfume—she could afford to buy it—without Mallery.

Of course Mallery was old—and he criticised her, said things about her manners, her breeding—would never be quite satisfied, even, with all of his experimenting—yet—

Meta got up, took out of her dresser drawer a bottle of Ambre Antique that Mallery had given her a few weeks be-

fore. She would put a few drops on her night dress, her hair. It would help her get to sleep. The bottle was empty! She must have neglected to cork it tightly or her mother had used the little that had been left.

She shook it violently. She sniffed longingly at the little four-cornered vial, took it to bed with her. It still had a pleasant reminiscence. How good smells could be. She couldn't have perfumes—or dinners—or fresh flowers—with Billy. Billy was a dear, friendly, kind, never old nor unenthusiastic nor critical nor superior. Billy—. She fell asleep towards morning.

She woke up late, called to her mother that she was not feeling well and would not go to the office. She'd marry Billy—she loved him. Surely she could get away from this silly notion about smells. She felt strangely weak, she didn't want to get up or dress. How silly she was. For years, now, this nonsense about smells and scents and odours had worried her. Other people didn't have it. It was just imagination, of course . . .

From the kitchen came the odour of frying bacon, a bit rancid, and eggs not too fresh, the boiling of an inferior brand of coffee, escaping gas. From the court came the noise of children, the smell of refuse pails. The air was stifling, dead.

Meta got out the little pile of empty perfume bottles. But they had been empty too long now. They did not drown the mustiness of the house, the hot, fetid smells of the street. She wanted to marry Billy—she loved Billy—she couldn't stand this—smells—smells—smells—

There was a ring at the bell. Her mother came into her room without knocking and brought a bundle, stood for a minute waiting, went away sullenly when Meta made no move to open it.

Alone, Meta tore off the wrappings. It was a bottle of Ambre Antique, precious in its tan box, from Mallery.

It meant marrying him—not just taking this, of course, but yielding, definitely, to the lure of perfume.

She looked at the bottle, fingered the white ground glass stopper, the smooth amber sides, tremblingly. The smells of the street came in, the heavy, jarring noises. She couldn't fight against it.

In a kind of a frenzy, she pulled out the stopper, dabbed the perfume on her

arms, her face, her night dress. She must have perfume—pleasant things—something out of life. She saw Mallery, thin of hair and of cheek, sensitive, sarcastic, neurotic. With the Ambre Antique still damp on her fingers she walked over to her little desk in the corner and pulled out a piece of writing paper to accept his proposal of marriage.



## The Seventh Son

*By Francis Carlin*

OLD Tim has neither field nor farm;  
But they do be saying he has a charm  
Against the painful worms that gnaw  
The nerves within an aching jaw.

And he showed me once a folded scrap  
Of writing, hidden in his cap,  
That clears the barn and dairy-shelf  
Of rats, when chanted by himself.

And he also has another one,  
From the seventh son of a seventh son,  
By which he stops the living flood  
Of animal and human blood.

So as I said, the heart of Tim  
Has not a care at all for him;  
While I would give my worth to find  
A charm to change a woman's mind.



THE fact that a man is successful with women proves nothing. What counts is the quality of the women he is successful with.



WHEN the future looks golden, a man is in love. When the past looks golden, he is married.

# The Saving Grace

*By Arthur Carter*

WHEN she met him she had ten thousand dollars on deposit in various savings institutions. Her case was not unusual. They loved for a while, deliriously happy, and then the reaction set in. He tired of her and departed one day without saying good-bye. She figured her bank books pensively. Gone was her illusion, but her account was now fifty thousand.



# A Storm at Sorrento

*By Aloysius Coll*

THE storm, a coppery giantess,  
Boiled up behind the sea  
And clutching at the wind and wave,  
Came thundering in to me!

Her hair a mop of knotted clouds  
All tangled in the skies;  
Like bloody smoke she flung the dark  
Red fury of her eyes!

She shook the frantic trees on shore,  
Like some far-reaching hag,  
Beat back the sun with watery hands,  
And wrestled with the crag!

\*       \*       \*       \*

The sunlight now! And not a scar  
To show what demon hand  
This scimitar of curving foam  
Flung out across the sand!



# Variations on a Theme by Havelock Ellis

By *Carl Van Vechten*

## I

ONE day it occurred to Havelock Ellis that he had made more notes than he could ever conveniently use, and so he filled a book with them, "Impressions and Comments," a delightfully stimulating volume, one of the best of its author, brimming over with pictures, ideas, and running commentary. Herein one may find discussions of Sir Richard Burton, Romanesque architecture, vegetarianism and vivisection, the significance of the body, William Blake, Jacobean furniture, obscurity in style, Jules de Gaultier, crowd psychology, Bovaryism, the symbolism of the apple, the Bayeux tapestry, flowers, the decline in the birth rate, and Granville Barker. Here, indeed, is a book which rewards any chance reader who flips open the pages. Picking it up for five minutes or an hour, I have never failed to find enjoyment in it.

Recently I ran across the following passage:

"I have often noticed . . . that when an artist in design, whether line or colour or clay, takes up a pen and writes, he generally writes well, sometimes even superbly well. Again and again it has happened that a man who has spent his life with a brush in his hand has beaten the best penmen at their own weapon. . . . It is hard indeed to think of any artist in design who has been a bad writer. The painter may never write, but when he writes, it would almost seem without an effort, he writes well. . . . And then, for contrast, think of that other art, which yet seems to be so much nearer to words; think of musicians!"

WHY is it that musicians cannot write? I asked myself, for it needed only a half moment's reflection to convince me that Mr. Ellis was right, although he does not attempt to answer the question. . . . Wagner is the first musician-writer to come to mind, for whether he could or not, Wagner certainly *did* write. He not only wrote the text for his lyric dramas but also countless papers, manifestos, explanations, arguments, etc., most of which have been carefully collected, and which Mr. William Ashton Ellis has rendered to us in very faithful if not very distinguished English in eight volumes. Several volumes of letters and the posthumous "Life" make a formidable total.

There are undoubtedly some priceless facts, some brilliant ideas, somewhat incoherent and contradictory, buried in this mass of matter. Biographers in general have found this material useful; music critics occasionally turn to it for corroboration or assistance; others leave it alone. Wagner, indeed, was always at a disadvantage when he wrote in words. Even the plays do not rise to very inspired heights without the music. Compare the direct and moving music of the love scene in the second act of "Tristan" with the metaphysical sentiments and sentences which flow from the lips of the guilty pair. His prose works, with their equivocal qualities, their ponderous and opaque phraseology, their individual and very bad German, would seemingly resist translation, but Mr. Ellis has wrestled with

the task, accomplished it, and even emerged to praise Wagner's style, praise which has found no echo.

Of course the "Life" should have been a masterpiece and it is far from being a failure. Autobiography, even at its worst, is possibly the most entralling form of literature. But compare the sparkling chapters of Benvenuto Cellini with the halting, obscure and deliberately untruthful pages in Richard Wagner's account of himself and you will feel, somehow, that you have been cheated. And yet Wagner probably had more to tell than Cellini. The true story of the Wesendonck affair, the full details of his *ménage* with the virgin king, a glowing narrative of his capture of Cosima von Bülow—these in themselves would have furnished the material for a remarkable tryptich in the style of George Moore's "Hail and Farewell." But he could not put it down. He did not know how to write. James Huneker, Catulle Mendès, a dozen writers have done it better, and yet *Wagner was there when these things happened*.

Gluck's famous preface to "Alceste" scarcely gives him claim to serious consideration as a writer. Mozart's letters, which are best perused in the volume of excerpts compiled by Friedrich Kerst, contain many passages of interest to the music student, but they cannot be regarded as literature. Their style, the translator assures us, is "careless, contradictory, and sprawling." Beethoven certainly knew nothing of the literary art. Schubert and Weber remained ignorant of it. Poor Chopin knew enough to stick to music. De Musset replied to George Sand's "Elle et Lui" with another *roman à clef*, but when "Lucrezia Floriana" appeared Chopin contented himself with answering it on the piano. Mendelssohn's prose, exposed to us in his numerous letters, is as sentimental as his music and not so pretty.

Offenbach's account of his trip to America is the work of a fifth-rate journalistic hack; certainly not worthy of a man whose music has been com-

pared to champagne. Saint-Saëns is ponderous enough in prose; in his books he suggests the bassoon figure at the beginning of the scherzo of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Gounod is insufferably sentimental. Anton Rubinstein was a great pianist and an indifferent composer, but his autobiography is even worse than his music. We see very little of the artist who created "Carmen" in the letters of Bizet. Alfred Bruneau, a composer of the second class, is a music critic of the third. Vincent d'Indy's "César Franck" is a scholarly piece of work which serves its purpose, but it is in no sense a literary masterpiece. It could be read only by a musician.

What an opportunity Massenet missed in his "Memoirs"! What a life the man had! What a career! But the book is notable neither for revelations of character nor incident. It is written in very mediocre French and even the spelling is bad. Hugo Wolf, in 1884, and for the following three years, acted as musical critic for the Vienna *Salonblatt*. Ernest Newman says: "He wrote singularly well," but the excerpts and summaries that he offers us in evidence of this prowess are not very convincing. If Wolf's reputation as a song writer is not as overwhelming as Mr. Newman would have us believe (he places him above Schubert), it may be said without fear of contradiction that as a writer of prose he is little known even by musicians.

Cyril Scott is a facile composer of pretty music, the importance of which it would be a mistake to overestimate. Scott has also published five volumes of poetry and a volume of translations from Stefan George and Baudelaire. The titles of his books are "The Shadows of Silence and the Songs of Yesterday," "The Grave of Eros and the Book of Mournful Melodies, with Dreams from the East," "The Voice of the Ancient," "The Vales of Unity," and "The Celestial Aftermath, A Springtide of the Heart, and Far-Away Songs."

A. Eaglefield Hull devotes an entire chapter in his somewhat emotional book

on Cyril Scott to this "poetry," as he explains that Scott at times believes himself to be greater as poet than as composer. We learn via Mr. Hull that in "The Garden of Soul-Sympathy" the composer rhapsodizes "in soul-knit 'gladness,' and harmonious visions of wondrous colour move majestically over the ear." Um, perhaps! Here is an example of Mr. Scott's "poetry":

Sounds of colourless dreams, of strange  
visionary vagueness telling:  
Immaculate music, heralding the life of  
sighs,  
Bells across the lone lassitude, rising, rolling,  
endlessly swelling  
Over the wasteland—solitude lost in the  
clear chaotic skies.

It may be noted that Mr. Scott is troubled with the mania for alliteration. Such other examples as "mournful melodies," "shadows of silence," "a far-off flute has faded," "dreamful daffodil," "ambient arms," "future fiends," dribble through his work. It is perhaps a coincidence that Mr. Scott's alphabetical position on the poetry shelf lies just half way between that of Laurence Hope and that of Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

In prose Mr. Scott has written a book called "The Philosophy of Modernism." For a chapter or two he presents some interesting ideas, though clothed in a style which in no sense could be described as literature. His essay on Percy Grainger is really significant. Then he maunders through an attack on the critics which is neither clearly thought out nor clearly expressed and which contains such gems of thought as this: "All the same, it is a noteworthy fact that the great spiritual geniuses and adepts of the world have never condemned and denounced their fellow creatures or the works of their fellow-creatures: and to take one sublime instance—Jesus of Nazareth, etc., etc., etc." Cyril Scott is not one of the great composers and I would not have lingered so long over his case were it not for the fact that he offers one of the most typical examples of the musician as writer.

William Wallace, the composer of

"Villon" and other tone-poems for orchestra, has written a book called "The Threshold of Music," which, I have been assured, is a good book, but although it has been lying around the house within easy reach for at least two years, I have never been able to read it. Edward MacDowell's lectures, delivered at Columbia University, collected in a volume entitled, "Critical and Historical Essays," might best be described by the convenient epithet, piffle, pedantic piffle at that. It is only fair to state that MacDowell himself was not responsible for their publication and probably would have been violently opposed to it.

Musicians, as a rule, are even satisfied to set bad librettos when they write operas because they have no true appreciation of good poetry, good drama. Most opera books rank very low and some of the greatest operas have been composed to some of the worst books. Weber, for instance, found "Oberon" inspiring and Mozart made masterpieces of "Don Giovanni" and "The Magic Flute," while Verdi lavished some of his best music on the texts of "La Forza del Destino" and "Il Trovatore."

## II

THERE are certain exceptions, however. Berlioz was a good writer. He might have emerged a famous figure if he had simply given us his "Memoirs" and his criticism is stylistic and expert, sparkling with biting phrases and trenchant words. In "A Travers Chants," "Les Grotesques de la Musique," "Les Soirées d'Orchestre," his collected journalism in short, he wielded a delightfully nervous pen. His prose, indeed, is better on the whole than his music. Perhaps that is the explanation of his power in this direction. It is really a pity he turned to tone.

Schumann, too, was far from being a bad writer, although he by no means stands in a class with Berlioz in this respect. Still his writing is simple and natural and radiates a certain happy charm. Occasionally, indeed, the man

lights on a sublime phrase. However, even his *Träumerei* is better than all the two volumes of his collected prose works.

The indefatigable Liszt found time for many matters in his long life—love affairs, piano playing, composing, transcription, pushing Wagner, getting Berlioz's *"Benvenuto Cellini"* produced at Weimar, and even for the writing of a number of books. None of these can be considered a literary masterpiece, but the *"Life of Chopin"* contains passages of great charm. To James Huneker the most eloquent page describes "an evening in the Chaussée d'Antin, for it demonstrates the Hungarian's literary gifts and feeling for the right phrase. This description of Chopin's apartment 'invaded by surprise' has a hypnotizing effect on me. The very furnishings of the chamber seem vocal under Liszt's fanciful pen." Personally, I prefer the pages devoted to the polonaise. Liszt's book on the gipsies, too, has charm, although one is permitted to disagree with the facts. . . .

And now we come down to a modern musician-writer, Claude Achille Debussy. Curiously enough, this French composer was rather an adept with the pen. He had a penetrating sense of irony and he was not above epigram. In 1901 he became music critic for the *Revue Blanche*. Two years later he held the same position on the *Gil Blas*. In 1903 he went to London to write his impressions of Wagner's *Tetralogy* for *Gil Blas*. Passages from this review have become bywords. Witness the following:

"How insufferable these people in helmets and wild-beast skins become by the time the fourth evening comes round. Remember that at each and every appearance they are accompanied by their damned *leit-motive*. There are some who even sing it themselves. It is as if a harmless lunatic were to present you with his visiting card while he declaimed lyrically what was inscribed thereon."

This was one of the earliest pricks of the Wagner bubble. Here is more De-

bussy iconoclasm: he called Gluck a "pedant," Bach "that worthy man," Beethoven "a deaf old man," Berlioz "a monster," César Franck "a Belgian," Massenet "our most notorious master." Of the songs of Schubert he said, "They are inoffensive; they have the odor of bureau drawers of provincial old maids,—ends of faded ribbon—flowers forever faded and dried—out-of-date photographs! Only they repeat the same effect for interminable stanzas and at the end of the third one wonders if one could not set to music our national Paul Delmet." Again "one stumbles on Mendelssohn" in Schumann's *"Faust"*; Grieg's music gives him "the charming and bizarre sensation of eating a pink bonbon stuffed with snow"; Saint-Saëns's *"Henry VIII"* is "a grand historical opera." All of this is witty and some of it is sound. However, according to J. G. Prod'homme, Debussy did not write everything he signed. He ascribes an article entitled *"Enfin Seuls!"* which appeared under Debussy's name in *S.I.M.* in 1915, to a "disciple," and he also informs us that the score for d'Annunzio's *"Mystère de Saint Sébastien"* was only finished on the day agreed upon by the collaboration of other "disciples," very familiar with the Debussy manner.

On these four men any case for musicians as writers of prose must be rested. Berlioz, it must be admitted, stands the test. Schumann and Liszt as authors would be completely forgotten (are, indeed, more or less forgotten) were it not for their music. Debussy's criticisms have not even been collected in book form, although no doubt they will be.

### III

AND now let us pass on the painters. Mr. Ellis himself reminds us that "Leonardo, who was indeed great in everything, is among the few great writers of Italian prose. Blake was first and above all an artist in design, but at the best he had so magnificent a mastery of words that beside it all but

the rare best of his work in design looks thin and artificial. Rossetti was drawing and painting all his life, and yet, as has now become clear, it is only in language, verse and prose alike, that he is a supreme master. Fromentin was a painter for his contemporaries, yet his paintings are now quite uninteresting, while the few books he wrote belong to great literature, to linger over with perpetual delight. Poetry seemed to play but a small part in the life of Michelangelo, yet his sonnets stand today by the side of his drawings and marbles. Rodin has all his life been passionately immersed in plastic art; he has never written and seldom talks; yet whenever his more intimate disciples, a Judith Cladel or a Paul Gsell, have set down the things he utters, they are found to be among the most vital, fascinating, and profound sayings in the world."

Mr. Ellis has forgotten many names, that of Whistler, for example, of whom Max Beerbohm says (in "Yet Again") : "He was a born writer. He wrote, in his way, perfectly; and his way was his own, and the secret of it died with him. . . . His style never falters. The silhouette of no sentence is ever blurred. Every sentence is ringing with a clear vocal cadence. . . . Read any page of 'The Gentle Art of Making Enemies' and you will hear a voice in it, and see a face in it, and see gestures in it. . . ."

Du Maurier, to a certain extent, was another such. To be sure he began to write late in life and after he had produced "Peter Ibbetson" he devoted less attention to the social drawings on which he had founded so brilliant a career in *Punch*. Nevertheless, he illustrates his own novels and who can think of Peter, of Trilby, of Svengali without thinking of Du Maurier's drawings, so close was the intimacy between his two pens?

Aubrey Beardsley, too, ran his twin talents side by side, although he gave himself more whole-heartedly to his drawing. Yet the fragment, "Under the Hill," indicates a sure and fantastic genius for a special kind of writing, as

special in its way as his painting and wholly analogous to it in spirit.

Jacques Blanche has since his youth been both a prolific writer and a prolific painter. His fame as a painter has perhaps outdistanced his fame as a writer because of the celebrity of his models. He has painted very nearly every person of importance who has been in Paris for the past thirty years, from George Moore to Nijinsky. The best of his paintings probably are the self-portrait in the Uffizi in Florence and the picture of the artist Thaulow and his family which hangs in the Luxembourg. On the whole he writes better than he paints; his essay on Degas is probably the best which exists. Wyndham Lewis, too, turns from canvas to paper with infinite ease and so does Gordon Craig.

Often, however, as Mr. Ellis has suggested was the case with Thackeray and Hazlitt, the bad painter takes to writing. Thomas Hardy, for example, began his career as an architect, an allied art, and he has used his knowledge of the technique of his art very concretely in his books. The hero of "A Laodicean" is not the only architect in Mr. Hardy's works.

George Moore was a painter and it was while he was staying in Paris that he imbibed much of the atmosphere that is so essential a part of his books. We owe to this phase of his life such works as "The Confessions of a Young Man," and "Memoirs of My Dead Life." But could such a passage as the description of the trees in "A Story Teller's Holiday" have been written by any but a painter? I hardly think so.

Holbrook Jackson tells us that George Bernard Shaw as a boy never wanted to write. He wished to draw and Michelangelo was his boyish ideal. Gautier had the intention of becoming a painter when he first went to Paris. He entered the studio of Rioult for a period. "He had the painter's eye," writes Huneker, "the quick, retentive vision, the color sense, above all the sense of composition." The creator of "Une Nuit de Cléopâtre" was certainly

a painter, and when Fokins arranged this picture-poem as a Russian ballet he had but to follow the color-suggestion of the painter-poet.

Huysmans was a descendant of a long line of Dutch painters, one of whom, Cornelius Huysmans, of Mechlin, has a certain fame among the lesser landscape painters of the great period. Huneker writes, "Joris-Karl Huysmans should have been a painter; his indubitable gifts for form and color were by some trick of circumstance transposed to literature." Romy de Gourmont called him an *eye*. His description of the carcass of a cow hanging outside a butcher shop is certainly the work of a painter: "As in a hothouse, a marvelous vegetation flourished in the carcass. Veins shot out on every side like the trails of bind-weed; dishevelled branch-work extended itself along the body and efflorescence of entrails unfurled their violet-tinted corallas, and big clusters of fat stood out; a sharp white against the red medley of quivering flesh." But it is unnecessary to particularize: "A Rebours," "La Cathédrale," "La Bas" are all painted from cover to cover. . . .

Octave Mirbeau painted in his moments of leisure and so great an artist as Claude Monet looked upon his painting with favor. He owned a very large collection of paintings of Monet, Renoir, Cézanne, Pissarro, Van Gogh, Rodin and others which have been sold since his death. Turn to the description of the garden in "Le Jardin des Supplices" and you will see how he turned his other talent to account.

#### IV

INSPIRATION, as it affects the artist, is a subject I do not approach without the proper dread. Either it is something mystic, something entirely beyond human ken, something "ecstatic," as Arthur Machen would have it, or else it becomes, in matter of fact English, something very near the ludicrous.

James Branch Cabell shows us with withering irony in "The Cream of the

Jest" how a middle-aged, pudgy, greyish-haired, commonplace sort of man, whose conversation seemingly never rises above the most banal level, derives the inspiration for the most fantastic romances from his equally commonplace wife and the broken cover of a cold-cream jar. The mystery of the procedure is emphasized by the obvious fact that "The Cream of the Jest" rises to the requisite ecstatic level, although in style, manner, and matter, it is contradictory to a degree with which no satisfactory comparison comes readily to mind. Mr. Cabell undoubtedly writes very personal books, but in his own way he comes nearer perhaps to the solution of certain problems of the author than anyone else.

And here we have, perhaps, the first glimmer of understanding. For Mr. Cabell's *Felix Kennaston* depends on his wife, the cover of the cold-cream jar, and *other men's books*. Even on straggling downright stupid conversation about the weather. And the author, the painter, are thus reduced to models, however far-fetched and ridiculous the models may appear in the light cast by the finished work. George Sand indubitably loved all her lovers, but somewhere in the back of her head she realized that their ultimate purpose was "copy." Someone once asked Maurice Maeterlinck what had been his inspiration for the construction of "Pelléas et Mélisande" and his reply was, "I was writing a piece that suited my wife." Cecil Forsythe, in his book, "Nationalism in Music," educes the interesting theory that a great sea-power never produces great musicians, but that authors and painters flourish under triumphant mercantile, social and political régimes.

Painters, writers, get their material from the world. They must mingle with men, understand and see life, no matter how far removed from life their finished art may be. Art, as may be stated categorically, is certainly not a reproduction of nature, and yet, without nature, or some human aspect of it, the painter, the writer are helpless.

Perhaps you have never seen a Monet hay-stack in a real field, but unless such a thing as a hay-stack existed, unless the sun had lighted that hay-stack, the picture would have been impossible. It is not important or essential that Leonardo's "Mona Lisa" exactly reproduces the effect of the model, but if such a thing as a woman did not exist in the world, the picture could have never been painted.

Machen detects his ideal quality of ecstasy to the highest degree in Homer, Rabelais and Cervantes, all men of action and wide experience. Indeed, he points out that one of the reasons why "The Pickwick Papers" is not as great as the "Odessey" is because Dickens was brought up in Camden Town. It is not carelessly then that Remy de Gourmont called Huysmans "an eye" and his dictum that whatever is deeply thought is well written is certainly just.

Havelock Ellis adds that whatever is *deeply observed* is well said. The artist in design, he continues to point out, is by the very nature of his work compelled to observe deeply, precisely, beautifully. He is never able to revolve in a vacuum, or flounder in a morass, or run after a mirage. So when he takes up his pen, by training, by acquired instinct, he still follows with the new instrument, deeply, precisely, beautifully, by the same law of Nature.

The musician, whose art is the most mystic, the most profound, the most "ecstatic" of any, simply because it deals with clang-tints and not with more definite symbols, is not, as Cecil Forsythe shows us, inspired by great deeds, by political confusion, by mercantile progress, by social intercourse. War never produces great music and England and America have produced less good music than Finland and Scandinavia, not to speak of Bohemia and Italy. The great Beethoven wandered alone, and he wrote some of his finest music after he became stone-deaf. The musical artist, indeed, shut up in a garret, may derive his masterpiece simply through the process of introspection.

There is no need for him to read; an illiterate composer is a possible figure.

"The song, the fugue, the sonata, have absolutely no analogues in the world of Nature," writes W. H. Hadlow. "Their basis is psychological, not physical, and in them the artist is in direct touch with his idea, and presents it to us, as it were, first hand. Given sound as the plastic medium, Music asks nothing more: it creates its subjects by the spontaneous activity of the mind."

And W. F. Apthorp says, "The bonds which hold Painting, Sculpture, and Poetry fast to Nature are far tougher and of more inexorable grip than any connection discoverable between Nature and Music. . . . We may safely assert that, though a certain modicum of Realism, or truth to Nature, is indispensable to the artistic status of Poetry, Painting, or Sculpture, Music can perfectly well do without it; also that such modicum of Realism—when present in Music—can not be regarded as any true measure of her artistic status."

It may be regarded as a significant fact that the four composers whom I previously selected as types of the fairly successful musician-writer all resorted to this "modicum of realism" in their music. Every one of them was what is known as a "literary" composer. Every one of them wrote "programme music." Every one of them leaned on Nature, books, and painting for his inspiration. Not only was Schumann's "Carneval" so inspired; all of his symphonies had a definite starting point somewhere outside music itself.

Berlioz and Liszt are notorious cases. It is only necessary to recall the titles of Berlioz's symphonies, "Fantastique," "Romeo and Juliet," "Harold in Italy" or of Liszt's tone-poems (a form which he invented), "Les Preludes," "Tasso," "Mazeppa," to realize that although music was the end to them it was not always the means. With Debussy it was the same: "L'Après-midi d'un Faune" had its beginning in Mallarmé; "La Mer," "Nocturnes," "Iberia," in Nature herself!

# Humberto

*By Matilda Breakspear*

TONIGHT I am alone. After proclaiming an aching tooth and the need of a dentist, I have returned from the Casa Cavalcanti to Milan. Annie can come when, and as often as, she likes to see me; but after all that happened last night I could not remain beneath the roof which shelters Humberto.

Annie is my sister, and Humberto is her husband. The palace where she lives with him is a dream of the middle ages exploited in stone, but attached to the possession of such piles of masonry are other things—such as inherited characteristics—multiplied by the centuries. Annie has married a full blown avatar.

Thirty-six hours ago I left this very hotel to go to them. And here I am—back again—wiser, but am I sadder? I am different.

It was like this. Jane came to Paris from London to join me, in order that we might come on together to Milan, and from thence go into the hills to visit Annie. Jane is an old friend of mine—more mine than Annie's, since we are of the same age, while my sister is younger. She knew Humberto before we did, having met him during the time when he was attached to the Italian Embassy at London.

Indeed it was through Jane that we met the count. One might almost add that it was she who made the match. This was of course before the war. Then came the marriage, and immediately afterward the complications which brought Italy into the affair; when like the brave man he most certainly is, Humberto left his regiment to enter the Italian air service. All the world knows of his brilliant record, and to-night I am not concerned with that.

He is no doubt a man of genius. All that he does is spectacular to an unprecedented extent. We have had reason to be more than satisfied with Annie's marriage. Yet—

Humberto—having announced that his happiness in being with Annie would once more be incomplete if Jane and I did not join their little home circle,—immediately occupied himself with the wires which eventually made passports and such difficulties melt like the mist before sunlight. And as soon as Jane and I arrived at Milan, he came for us in his car to take us to the hills where Annie waited in the wonderful old Casa Calvacanti. We were to be with them a month. We were there just one night.

Confusedly I recall the way we wound about through the valleys and over heights followed by the second car which brought our luggage and my maid.

Confusedly I recall my first impression of Annie, Annie standing as if in a triumphant happiness, a very modern young woman in the midst of an environment of rare historical interest.

The thing that most satisfied me was her so evident contentment. The marriage had been a success. I saw that at a glance. Aside from that I can recall few of my impressions—those of the first few hours. Sharper and more poignant emotions which fast followed them relegated them to the background. For during that first and only night during which I was the guest of Annie and Humberto, I was subjected to a such a concession of enlightenments as have left me in a bewildered condition.

I may add, oddly enough, that my first impression of Annie remains unaltered. Annie is a very happy woman.

I am enabled to think of her as one thinks of a beloved one in Paradise. For Annie lives in a mood — let me say under a spell — which closely resembles that of some being who has found a terrestrial Eden.

After the bliss of holding my little sister in my arms — the first time since her marriage — we went together to my apartment — with no formality of being ushered there by servants, be it understood — but in a happy and most united group. We — that is, Annie, Jane, Humberto, and I — trooped merrily up the beautiful old stairways and along stately corridors, all talking at once, and all caught up into that seventh heaven where souls of the righteous are supposed to meet. We four were together again. Jane, too, seemed as pleased as we were.

Past ages had dignified the place set apart for me, and my loving Annie's hands had given it that charm of flowers and books placed exactly as I should have placed them myself. The great windows framed the gift Italy offers all. Jane's room was that next to mine and we were pleased to find that a door connected them.

We left it open after Humberto and Annie had gone to change for dinner, and called much foolishness back and forth from one to the other as we occupied ourselves with brushes and the various secret matters associated with a dinner toilette, while Marie, my little French maid, ran from one to the other, ambitious as to the success of our attempts.

Then we dined. There were as yet no other guests. And since all were tired with the excitement of perhaps so much joyousness, we all flocked upstairs together in a sort of procession — going, with light hearts, to our various rooms. But I, with all my old delight of the eyes of seeing Annie, went first to hers, where we talked for another hour. During this interview I heard from her own lips that from the first hour of her marriage she had been a happy woman.

"One can ask no more than happiness."

"But it is doubled when one owes it to one's husband. There is only one Humberto," sighed Annie.

"I can see that."

"Do you know," said my Annie, "I think the secret of the joy that all who are near him seem to feel lies in the fact that he is such a happy creature himself."

"I can see that also," I consented thoughtfully.

## II

WITH that I kissed her and went to my room. Marie was not waiting for me, as I had, seeing her fatigue and anticipating that we should be late, told her that I would do for myself that night.

The moonlight streamed in through the open windows, so brightly as to rival the lights within the charming chamber where my much needed rest awaited me. I stood, listening for a moment, to find if Jane were stirring about in her apartment, but hearing nothing, went to the window to look out at the lovely vinelands bathed in the misty brilliance. It was very calm. But the calm was soon broken.

Almost immediately I heard some one at my door which I had not locked. And almost at the moment I called out my permission to enter, Marie came in.

I might say that she fell in — so precipitate was her entrance. It was a new Marie. A weeping Marie . . . a Marie who announced that she was leaving me in the morning, but wished to lie upon my threshold for the night.

It was furthermore a Marie afraid of a man — she — a Frenchwoman. For my brother-in-law was close at her heels. He was laughing as if mad. He crossed the room to my side as if anxious that I should enjoy his jest. But the fact that I did not do so seemed but to accentuate his mirth — furnish it a new source.

There we were. Three of us. Marie weeping. Humberto, as handsome as the handsomest male ever carved in

marble, laughing like a maniac, displaying the beautiful teeth of a young dog; and I — transfixed — speechless — a statue of astounded and virtuous spinsterhood! There was no need of any explanation. I asked for none. I understood.

It was another who asked that. For the door between Jane's room and mine was flung violently open, and there appeared a transfigured Jane — a Jane who contrived to give me the impression of a thunderbolt. I am not certain that she was conscious of my presence. She saw Humberto. And she saw Marie. I retain a distinct impression that she cursed both. I remember that I was bewildered by what then seemed to me to be her curious logic — a logic which seemed to be exercised in an effort to prove that my brother-in-law had been unfaithful. But to whom? And — that Marie, in the role of a viper — had injured *her*. But how?

There we were. Four of us now. And Humberto laughed on with redoubled mirth. Such a man! And handsome!

That which followed was like those distortions of reality that we accept in dreams and awaken to wonder over. Marie wept herself out of the room. I don't know where she went. She did not remain to lie upon my threshhold; for there was still to be considerable going and coming from and to my room, and I saw nothing more of her. She melted out of the dream.

But Humberto, with the air of a man exhausted by mirth, remained master of the situation. He approached me, and to my horror began to address me in such a diabolic manner as to convey the impression to Jane that he was excusing himself to me, not as a brother-in-law, but as a lover. And Jane was convinced — convinced of a thing that never had existed. Jane left us after telling me in a hard, cold voice that I never had deceived her, and that she had always known I was no better than I should be. Me? She closed her door very softly as she went out, and she left the Casa at daybreak, returning to

Milan in the hired motor-car that had brought Marie and the luggage. At this moment she is in a hotel within two squares from this where I am writing.

And Humberto? He returned to his laughter as a fish to water. It is his element. I saw in him during that half hour the face of the faun that laughs madly from so much Italian marble. Humberto is a type of joyousness, a perfectly kind being most at home in mirth.

This time he laughed until his cheeks were wet with tears. I must have bowed my shamed head upon my hands. When I looked up I was alone. I must have bowed my head for a somewhat longer period for the second time. When I lifted it — will you believe this? — it was to see Humberto enter my room leading Annie by the hand — an Annie who was an innocent vision of smiling joy. — And he? He stood before me radiant with triumph. I stared. I said nothing. What could I say. It was Humberto who spoke in a voice thrilled by emotion.

"Sister," he murmured, as he lead her to me, "Sister — Annie tells me that she has not told you — the glorious news."

Then, blushing happily, Annie told me. She was about to provide a vehicle through which Humberto's charm might be preserved for the benefit of posterity. She did not express herself in just those words, but I saw what was in her mind. Annie was going to have a baby.

"And," said her husband, "what a baby it will be!" Upon which he kissed Annie tenderly.

He was sincere in his tenderness, sincere in his pride, and I have no reason to doubt that he had been equally sincere in his mirth. Annie's husband is a genius. And in war a hero. And she is beyond all doubt a happy woman.

But after they had left me I fainted for the first time in my life. Yes, when I revived I found myself lying upon the floor.

# Four Faint Freckles and a Cheerful Disposition

*By George B. Jenkins, Jr.*

HELEN deliberately applied the lip-stick to her mouth. Carefully she followed the line of her upper lip, tracing its perfect curve from one corner of her mouth to the other. Her lower lip was a trifle thin, she thought, so she thickened it slightly, and then examined the result. She was satisfied. Her profile was pleasing.

With a tiny frown on her forehead, she considered the four faint freckles on the side of her nose. Those freckles persisted in spite of lemon juice, face lotions, and perseverance. She had tried everything, everything that had ever been advertised, everything that had ever been suggested by sympathetic friends—and the freckles remained.

Must she spend the rest of her life cursed by four faint freckles? Somewhat ruefully she stopped examining them, and brushed her eyebrows. She was really proud of her eyebrows. They were clear and distinct, yet not thick. She dusted a little rice-powder over the offensive freckles and descended the stairs to the reception hall.

Helen expected a visitor this evening, and she had almost finished her preparations for his coming. She drew a comfortable chair within easy distance of the fire. With the all-seeing eye of the instinctive housewife, she detected a spot on the chair that had escaped the vigilance of the maid, and with her dainty kerchief she brushed away the dust. The lights in the room were subdued so that her freckles would not be noticed. A number of

sentimental songs were placed conspicuously on the piano. After a final touch to her hair, she took up a book until he should arrive.

Men pursue some girls who are merely pretty. Other girls, though not pretty, have the knack of attracting men. And there are yet other girls who are not remarkably homely, or startlingly pretty, or unusually plain, or wonderfully lovely, and they are totally without masculine admirers.

Helen was a small, trim girl with a pleasant face, and the freckles that have been mentioned. She had her share of attention. The attention, however, was the customary politeness of the average man to the average woman. It contained nothing of affection, nothing of tenderness, nothing of love. Helen seemed to inspire a polite regard in the hearts of her men friends—and that was all.

Naturally she was not satisfied. Is any woman really happy unless she is in the middle of a romantic, exciting, violent love-affair? Doesn't she want perfumed kisses, and vehement protestations of undying affection, and exhibitions of jealous rage, and almost ceaseless tiffs?

She does.

Helen had never had a love-affair in her life. She had never received a letter that she could not have shown to her mother. She had never figured in an episode that could not have been witnessed by the neighbours. She had never been accused of being a thoughtless, heartless, soulless flirt.

In her high-school days she wrote passionate letters in purple ink to a boy in her class. He did not reply. She had gone automobiling with an utter stranger, and he called her, "A jolly little pal," and introduced her to his sister. She tried to flirt with two men at the same time, and they had talked the matter over with her, and were not angry at all.

To-night she expected a man she had known all her life. He was the son of an intimate friend of her father's and she knew exactly how Arthur Hollins regarded her. There had never been the slightest bit of emotion in their relations; they had merely been friends and companions since they were boy and girl together.

Helen thought over the almost romantic episodes in her life. There had been several men she cared for, but they all were absolutely indifferent to her—save that they liked her in a friendly way.

She was discouraged. She wanted to be loved, she wanted to be caressed, she wanted to be worshiped and adored. And Arthur Hollins would spend the evening discussing baseball, and politics, and their mutual acquaintances. Possibly he would ask her to go to the theater with him, and she would accept. Then after she had given him a few sweet cakes and a bit of Port, he would go home. The evening would have passed—and that was all.

She thought of the uninteresting, uneventful hours that were in store for her, and began to grow melancholy. Must she remain always a "pal," a friend to every man she knew? Wouldn't anyone ever swear that she was a siren, a breaker of hearts, a menace to men? Must she be cursed by four faint freckles and a cheerful disposition all the rest of her life? She began to weep softly.

Arthur Hollins stepped into the room and saw her. She made a pathetic picture as she sat there, apparently unconscious of his arrival. But she did know that he had entered, and she was

willing to let him see her weeping. In the depth of her feminine mind she concluded that she would play upon his sympathies, she would try the effect of tears. Every other time he had seen her, she had been cheerful and happy. Her troubles had been concealed under a care-free exterior. Now he would see her in a sorrowful mood.

He stared for a moment, nonplussed at what he saw. Then he became sympathetic.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

Her hand wavered toward him in a pathetic gesture. She was performing before an audience of one: herself. She began to enjoy the sweet satisfaction of being miserable. His futile attempts to understand were soothing.

"Has anything happened?" he asked.

"No." Her voice was small and subtly sad. "There's nothing the matter . . ."

There was something the matter, and she knew the reasons for her tears. But he would not have realized their importance.

He came close to her and stood looking down upon her bowed figure. Her hands were over her face, and her shoulders drawn together. She was careful to keep actual tears from flowing, for if she wept her nose would become red.

"Has anyone been unpleasant to you?" he asked, "or have you been annoyed—?"

"No." There was a tiny trace of a sob in the word. She pointed to the chair she wished him to occupy. It was fairly near the one she sat in, and he drew it closer and tried to persuade her hands from her face.

"Then what—why—?" He was really confused by finding her so distressed by "nothing." Always before she had been cheerful.

"I just feel miserable," she said, and gave him a glimpse of her face.

She did not look as though she were seriously ill. Her complexion was good. Her lips, he thought, were exceptionally red. And he knew that if

she wished him to go home that she would frankly tell him so. They knew each other well enough for that.

Again he tried to draw her hands from her face, and this time she permitted it. But he did not drop her hands as he intended. Half-perceiving that she was not unwilling, he bent close to her, looking deeply into her eyes, while her hands clung to his.

Helen saw, with sudden delight, that he was about to kiss her. Her dainty soul drew back at the knowledge, while her lips puckered for the caress. She correctly anticipated his intentions, and an inner voice told her to smile, while another voice told her to remain serious.

For a moment he hesitated. The mental attitude of years had to be overcome in a second. Before, he had thought of her as an amiable companion, never as a girl with alluring lips.

He leaned over and kissed her. She did not resist, neither did she respond. Naturally he attempted to kiss her again. Her lips were deliciously fresh. But she sprang to her feet, crossed the room, and flung herself upon a couch and burst into tears. They were real tears.

"No. No!"

Her voice quivered with actual distress.

He was confused. She had deliberately permitted a caress, and man-like, he didn't see why he shouldn't do so again. But he was soon disillusioned.

"Horrid!" she said to herself. "Horrid! I made him kiss me. I made him!"

She reviled herself for her action, and still she was a bit glad, deep in her heart, that she was attractive enough to make him desire to repeat the experience.

Touching her hair to make sure that she was still appealing, she looked at him again. He was standing before her, evidently undecided whether he had been inexcusably rude, or whether

he would be permitted to repeat his previous action.

"I can never trust you again," she said, her eyes downcast. She produced the impression that she was grievously hurt. "And I *did* like you so much!"

He pondered this for a moment.

"I'm sorry," he said.

"We had been such good friends!" she said. "I thought you cared for me in a friendly way— You've never tried to— Do you— Are you—"

Her voice trailed off into nothingness. This was his test. If he said he loved her— If he didn't say he did—

Courageously he replied,

"Helen, I have always thought of you as a chum, just as you considered me. But to-night—"

There was a deep note in his voice that she had never heard before. His tones thrilled her; she felt as though she had loved him without identifying the emotion. Memories of how he had looked years before grew within her heart. She brooded over them and they became tender, sacred things. His voice kept on, thrilling her incessantly with its love-tones.

"—To-night I see you as you always have been. I have been blind, but now— You are the one girl that every man hopes he will some day meet. I have had you near me all my life, and I did not know it. Now that I have found you, won't you—"

His courage failed him, and he stood confused, tongue-tied, irresolute.

Completely mistress of herself, with the taste of his kiss still upon her lips, Helen looked upon the havoc she had wrought. She knew, knew with the keen certainty of a woman, that he had been trapped by her cunning. She had, by a sob or two, and a tear or two, brought this specimen of the masculine gender to her feet.

And with this knowledge came the thought that, after all, the quarry was scarcely worth the chase. With the experience of this evening to encourage her, to give her confidence, she would never lack lovers. Inwardly she smiled

at the simplicity of the game, it was so absurdly easy. Why hadn't she thought of it before?

When he had made his stumbling way from the house, Helen carefully examined her complexion. Again she frowned at the four faint freckles, but immediately afterwards she smiled at them. They were her most deadly weapons. Who would suspect a small and dainty miss who flaunted her

freckles before the world? She would be treated with friendly consideration by all men. She need not angle for their attention by using such obvious bait as startling clothes, expensive perfumes, or a glaringly artificial complexion.

Thanks to the beguiling effect of her freckles, and aided somewhat by soothing voice and the ability to be convincing pathetic, Helen felt that she was prepared for life.



## Curiosity

*By John F. Lord*

WHEN we approached the crater of the volcano, I would not go near the edge of the world. My wife, with her usual fearlessness, however, walked right over to the rim. It was this action of hers, which overcame her fear, that prompted me to walk to the rim too. I wanted to see how far down she had fallen.



MANY a man who thought he was marrying on account of solid comfort has found that he really married on account of solid ivory.



THERE are two ways of embarrassing a woman: by kissing her in the presence of either your wife or her husband.



BIRDS in their little nests agree because the he-bird doesn't know what the she-bird is jabbering about.



NO man knows what love is until he has loved three different girls at the same time.

# The Troubadour

*By Phillips Russell*

TO the white people of his acquaintance Wat Summers was merely a banjo pickin' nigger who wouldn't work. Only among the ladies of his race was there genuine appreciation of him as a man and an artist. They recognized in him a troubadour, a lyr-ist, a minstrel, entitled to tribute and sustenance from the community because of the joy that his coming brought. Wherever he went among them the pot was soon upon the fire and the skillet early popped with fatness.

Consequently, when Wat arose from his slumber in a deserted house alongside the road one morning, slung his banjo over his back, and headed for the cabin whose blue spiral smoke was visible above the pine tops, he felt fairly certain of what his reception would be.

He was not disappointed. He encountered the mistress of the house down at the branch which crossed the road. She was about to start the day's work of washing clothes. Three children—gobs of black from which protruded glistening eyes—played around her feet. When she recognized the visitor coming through the bushes, she placed her hand on her rolling hips and threw her head back, her teeth gleaming.

"Well, ef it ain't Wat Summers!" she cried.

"Dat's me!" said Wat. He swept off his cap and bowed. (Troubadours are men of courtesy. They are at their best in the presence of ladies.)

"How you come on and whar is you been lately?" she demanded.

"Round and erbout," said Wat. "I ain't complainin' none, thanky mami."

"Is you had yo' brekkus yit?"

"I had a little snack. I ain't hongry

'tall. I jest stopped to pass de time er day."

Mandy knew this for what it was—mere diffident falsehood, and wiping her hands on her apron and calling her brood, she led the way without further parley to the house.

There she sat the minstrel down before an oil cloth table, tossed a piece of fat meat on the spider skillet which she inserted among the coals in the fireplace, and got out some dishes. When the meat had browned, she threw in a handful of flour, stirred it with a half cupfull of water, lifted the skillet and with a deft motion emptied its contents of crisp rind and hissing gravy into Wat's plate. This, combined with crackling bread, molasses, and a cup of coffee, made him a breakfast which warmed the roots of his being.

The meal disposed of, Wat reached around for the banjo slung across his shoulder. As pay for his breakfast he played a medley consisting of "Turkey in the Straw," "Possum Trôt," and "I Want to be Wid Jesus." Mandy sat near and beamed her gratitude for this diversion from the monotony of washing white folks's clo'es. The pickaninnies sprawled on the floor and listened with round, ecstatic eyes.

Wat brought his performance to a close with a ringing thud.

"I's sorry I kinnot tarry wid you no longer dis mawning," he said, rising, "but I got some perticular business to transack in de city today an' I mus' be on my way."

Mandy was regretful, but she knew by experience it were vain to hope to stay the minstrel, so she sped him on with invitations to "drap round dis way agin."

Wat dropped into the path that

wound down the slope through a field of broom sedge to the road below.

It promised to be a wonder day. The sun had already genialized the tartness of the early air and silvered the dewy lace of cobwebs strung from weed to weed across the fields. Here and there a poplar was a yellow spire above the roofs of dark green pines. An ash tree glowed red in a clump of cedars. A mocking bird balanced himself on the swinging spray of a sweet gum tree and tossed himself in air like a grey monoplane as he piped a September melody.

Though Wat felt rather than perceived these splendors, his spirit was thoroughly in tune with the day. He had slept and been fed; he was on his way to town where admiration and nickels were to be had from the throngs that would be attending court week. He had breakfasted with Mandy; at noon he would dine with Silla at her home in Slabtown; at night he would sup with 'Liza Jane at her cabin on Depot Hill. He swung his lute around and enticed from it little intimate, improvised melodies that expressed his satisfaction with the world.

He used no bone "picker" or celluloid device. He committed upon his loved instrument none of the atrocities current in modern vaudeville, but plucked its strands with his bare fingers, making them hum and mumble in and out of subtle shades of melody. In the hands of a white man a banjo is an alien thing. He succeeds in deriving from it only a harsh and strident clangour. Wat knew how to join his instrument to himself and make it a part of his arterial system.

The song he hummed was a small and foolish one, and by rights ought not to be quoted apart from the chords which coloured its words and the thump of Wat's thumb on the banjo's taut head. It ran like this:

"Mulletts walk an' mulletts talk;

"Mulletts eat wid a knife and fork!

"Mulletts! MULLETS! MULLETS!"

Emerging from the field Wat struck the highway which headed toward

town. Something caused him to glance backward along the road. A man was coming in a buggy. Wat's voice lowered softly. A second glance showed him the occupant of the buggy was a white man. His warbles thereupon ceased; only too often is the spirit of the African quenched in the presence of the grim Anglo-Saxon.

Wat's blood was chilled altogether when the buggy driver trotted up abreast and he saw from the badge on the coat that it was a deputy sheriff. Wat had nothing on his conscience, but he knew there was always something ominous for a black man in the arrival of any person who had to do with courts and the law.

The officer stopped his horse and motioned to Wat to halt.

"Say, Sambo," he said suavely, "whose place are you workin' on now?"

"I ain't wuckin on nobody's place," answered Wat.

"What do you do for a living, then?"

"I chops a little cotton in de spring and picks some in de fall, but mos'ly I plays de banjer."

"Mos'ly you plays de banjer?" And Wat thought he detected a shade of mockery in the white man's voice.

"Yes, suh," said Wat.

"Are you on your way to town?"

"Yes, suh."

"Well, you jump in here with me and I'll give you a ride."

"Thanky, suh." And Wat jumped nimbly in.

At first he was disposed to be grateful. He thought of a genial remark with which to start a conversation, but a glance at his host's set features gave him pause.

As the buggy ground on silently through the sand he became uneasy. It was rare but not unheard of for a white man to offer a negro a ride; but in the case of a deputy sheriff —

"Boss man," he said finally. "Is I 'rested?"

"You is," returned the deputy shortly.

"What is I done?" pleaded Wat.

"Nothin'. That's what you are arrested for."

And the deputy permitted himself a chuckle over the neatness of his own answer.

Wat sat silent. He knew better than to ask too many explanations of a white man. He hoped it would turn out to be merely one of those jokes which white folks sometimes played upon unsuspecting people of colour.

The deputy drove on into town and entered the court house square. It was crowded with the idlers that court week always brought. Most of them knew Wat and wondered what he was doing in a buggy with Deputy Sheriff Scroggins.

The buggy stopped at the rear of the court house in front of an office bearing the sign: "Joshua P. Criles, J. P."

"Get out," said the deputy.

He hitched his horse to a post and motioned to Wat to follow him into the magistrate's office. That small bare place was crowded with hangers-on of both colours. Soon Wat was led to the table behind which sat the justice, short, stout, red-faced.

"Take off your hat!" said the magistrate angrily.

Wat hastily jerked his cap off, and a titter ran around the room as his head was revealed—close-shaven with a little round patch of hair on the top centre. Wat had instructed the barber carefully about leaving that patch: it kept off ha'nts.

The deputy briefly explained the circumstances under which he had apprehended Wat.

The magistrate turned upon the prisoner:

"What's your age?"

"I dunno, suh," replied Wat. "But I think I's somewhere's eroun' thutty-odd yeas old."

"Are you willing to fight?" demanded the magistrate.

"Well, suh," said Wat hesitatingly. "I ain't much of a fightin' man, but I spec' I would hit back ef somebody hit me fust."

"Do you realize the country is in danger?" said the justice.

"Naw, suh."

"What?" shouted the magistrate. "Don't you know there's a war on?"

"I did hear some people tawkin' 'bout it, but I never paid much 'ten-tion," said Wat.

"Have you registered?" demanded the justice.

Wat was not sure what "registered" meant, so he thought it safer to answer "Naw, suh."

"Ever hear of the work-or-fight law?" queried the magistrate.

"Naw, suh."

"If I overlook the offense of non-registration," said the justice, "are you willing to enlist in the army at once?"

"I—I ain't much of a han' at sojerin'," faltered Wat.

"I'll give you ninety days on the roads to think it over," said the magistrate angrily. "Produce the next prisoner!"

They led Wat to jail through a lane bordered by the throngs he had meant to entertain in song. Instead of sleeping upon a pallet in some hospitable cabin, he spent the night in a cell whose darkness was to him like the end of the world.

## II

THE next day they took the minstrel out to a road camp in the upper end of the county, put him in convict clothes, and set him to work with other black prisoners hewing a new road through a tangle of rocks and boulders. His banjo was taken away from him and tossed up on a shelf in the gang boss's shack. Rings of steel were locked about his legs, linked by a short chain.

He was watched, in common with his fellows, by men carrying sawed-off shotguns loaded with buckshot. Work was from sun-up to sun-down under a sun that, though it was early autumn, crumpled the leaves on the trees and made the heat-waves shimmer on the wide horizon.

One day a member of the gang lifted

his voice in song, which was quickly suppressed by a guard. The head guard, however, knowing negro nature and knowing they would work better to a tune, countermanded the order, and by a sort of silent election Wat was chosen to lead the choir.

The effect of the music was magical. The men unconsciously fell into line and wielded their picks in unison, bringing them down at the end of every line of the song with a sharp aspirate sound. Wat would throw his pick high in the air as he opened each line of song, the other following him as faithfully as a boat crew follows the stroke oar. The effect was like this:

"Way down yander in de long-leaf pine—

Hff!

Stranger say to me, Now where's you gwine?—

Hff!

Says I to him wid my hat in my han'—

Hff!

Gwine fer to go an' leave dis lan'—

Hff!"

The result of thus unified work was that twice as much ground was covered as before, and therefore no further attempts were made to interfere with the singing.

The chance to indulge in a little music, however simple, had a transforming effect on Wat. As long as he could sing he could forget his troubles and project his imagination far from convict camps and armed guards into that country where moonlit nights succeed days of dreaming and where minstrels may walk and sing their songs by the side of deep rivers.

\* \* \*

Though Wat's spirit was freed, his body suffered; the steel shackles, wearing deep, made his legs fester, and sores began to show through the skin. He was afraid to complain, but the pain and weakness became so great that his work slackened. One day a guard cursed him and rushed toward him as if to strike him. This caused members of the gang to throw down their picks. For a moment the situation

looked ugly, but the head guard came running up and interfered.

Seeing Wat's condition, he became frightened and took him off the road work entirely, removed the shackles, and put him on easy work like fetching water from the spring until his ailment should be healed.

Since Wat appeared to them to be a faithful and harmless sort of negro anyhow, the guards maintained only a desultory watch over his movements and soon he became a sort of "trusty" and was allowed to go and come about the camp pretty much as he pleased. Under the relief from the shackles his legs soon began to heal.

There came a morning when the guards instead of ordering the gang out at daybreak as usual, stood about their shacks after breakfast, talking together. Wat repeatedly heard the word "armistice," but that meant nothing to him. Further listening to the talk among the guards made him prick up his ears.

At noon he got a word with Lumbus Morton, another convict. Lumbus was a mulatto. Moreover, he was educated and knew things.

"Lum," said Wat in a low tone, glancing about him, "whut is disyeh arm'stus?"

"Hit's whut dem Gemmans signed yistiddy," said Lumbus importantly. "De Gemmans is give in—dey called fer de calf-rope. Dey is th'ough fightin'."

"Does dat mean dey ain't no mo' waw?" asked Wat, trying to conceal the eagerness in his voice. But Lumbus didn't notice.

"Prackally dat," said he.

"Den a man can't be sont ter de waw no mo', kin he?" queried Wat.

"How kin he be sont ter de waw when dey ain't no mo' waw?" answered Lumbus.

Wat thanked him and withdrew. He picked up his water bucket and started as if for the spring. Reaching the bushes edging the woods, he circled around, keeping the guards' shacks between him and the gang at the road

below. Then he stepped out and approached the boss's shack. Nobody was around. Going up to a low window, Wat stole in like a cat and swiftly removed his banjo from the shelf where it lay gathering dust.

Hugging the banjo to him in line with his body, he again made off toward the spring. There he put his bucket down but kept on, on through a screen of plum bushes and into the sweetgum swamp on the other side. He walked swiftly, paying no attention to the briars that caught and tore at his clothing.

He kept to the swamp till he reached the railroad two miles from camp. Crossing this, he walked in the bed of a little shallow stream for a half mile. He emerged upon a little clearing in which was a cabin. He paused and studied the cabin for a moment. Yes, he knew this place. He had been here a long time ago, to a corn-shucking. It belonged to Titus Arroway, called "Tite" for short, a coloured farmer who was one of the few in the county who owned his own little estate. He was a friend, and Wat did not hesitate to walk up to the cabin. Not a

soul was at home. It was the middle of the afternoon and all hands were out in the fields.

On a nail he saw hanging a man's trousers and shirt. They would fit him very well. Stepping inside, he quickly changed into the vacant garments, stuffing his own convict uniform up the narrow chimney. "Tite" was a friend and would understand.

Wat stepped outside and looked. No one was in sight. He took to the woods again, following the direction of the railroad but keeping well into the woods. He knew a town twenty miles away. By walking all night he could reach it the next morning. He knew of a way to make himself safe there.

He did not permit himself to slacken pace until nightfall, when he took boldly to the railroad and walked alongside the ties. All danger was over now. It was time for a little music. He unslung his banjo, tightened the strings, and hummed softly. And this is what he sang:

"I wisht I wuz a hummin' bird;  
I'd nes' in a willer tree;  
Den nuffin' 'cept whut goes on wings  
Ever could git to me."



## "Ditez-Moi . . ."

*By George O'Neil*

NOW—no, I cannot speak of it today . . .  
The way she walked, the things she used to say.  
I only think—well, as you think of May  
After October winds have had their way . . .

You know how winsomely a birch can lean,  
Half like a penitent, half like a queen,  
And make you care . . . ? Ah, so could she! I've seen—  
But no, I cannot tell you what I mean.

# A Symphonic Poem with Jazz

By Carl Glick

**S**ARKI with lips tear stained  
Bared her bosom to the moon.

"You are my only lover now," she said.

But then Sarki is entitled to such dampool emotions . . . for she is old, fat, and has never been desired.



## The Riders

By Winston Bouvé

**T**HROUGH glen and fell my path spun out  
(*The moon hung low behind*)  
And ever before the woman of love  
Rode with the wind.

I did not see that the night was dark  
(*Nor that the way was long*)  
The woman of love beguiled my ears  
With strange, soft song.

We rode for many a twisting mile  
(*The woman of love and I*)  
Her sweet, cold kiss will chill my mouth  
Until I die!

And now through all the long dark nights  
(*The moon hangs low behind*)  
I follow the breathless shadow of love  
And the singing wind.

\*       \*       \*

Two riders gallop the winding road  
(*One is a phantom pale*)  
And the other follows the bitter wake  
Of the autumn gale.



# The Father

By L. M. Hussey

THEY had two rooms and a cubic space crowded with a gas stove and a table, called the kitchen. But these cost him more rent than he would have paid a year ago, before the first intimations of that curious pride came stealthily into his blood, stirring his belated ambition.

His wife had been dead since Beulah was a baby, and after her death his shiftlessness was in no degree improved. He earned very little money and most of it went for alcohol. However, he was never brutal; he was always kind to the little one. Her clothes were torn, her stockings were full of holes, her hair was never combed; but he liked to trot her on his knee and smooth her face with his pudgy, rough hands. In a vague way, he pitied her. She was so small, so ugly, so forlorn.

Then, as she grew older, he paid her less and less attention. She was quite as bad looking as ever, but no longer pitiful. Her body grew up slim and hard, her tongue developed a ready answer; she was adequate to the conditions of her living. He let her go to school, but ignored any of her primitive necessities; when he was thoroughly drunk, she stole what money she could get out of his pockets.

Then, one evening, he experienced a revelation.

They were eating their dinner; he bent close to his plate, raising his knife methodically to his mouth. It was very hot; he wore no collar, and his soiled suspenders hung limply over his contracted shoulders.

Beulah sat opposite to him, thoughtful, staring at the cloth. She wore a

cheap, coloured waist, open at the throat, and her white skin glistened. Her small hands lay motionless on the table; her head drooped, and her heavy hair sagged a little over her ears and forehead.

"Pop!" she said suddenly, "I'm going to tell you something."

He grunted but did not speak.

"Do you know what I'm going to do, Pop?" she asked.

He made no reply.

"Do you hear?"

"Well, what?"

"I'm going to business school!"

His knife rose and fell as before; it clicked against his teeth. For a moment it seemed that he had not heard.

Then, slowly raising his head, he stared at her intently.

She met his eyes. Her pupils were dilated, her cheeks were flushed a little, the tips of her ears, visible beneath the enclosing hair, were pink. The vision of her expectant face startled him; he gazed at her as if she were a stranger, and one that fascinated him. There was something in her appearance profoundly moving, profoundly surprising.

The lines on his forehead contracted, his mouth dropped open a trifle, and in his slow brain he groped for understanding. Something was different, some change had come to her.

Then, like an inspiration, he understood. She was young, she was fascinating, she was pretty! Without achieving this comprehension in definite words, the certain fact of it flooded his mind as with a luminous ray.

Staring at her, his surprise and wonder deepened. He felt like one who

returns from an absence of years, to find childish faces grown into maturity, and all their ways transformed. For some seconds he questioned the truth of his senses, he doubted his eyes; it seemed incredible that this momentous fact could have eluded him. Across the meagre table they stared at each other steadily.

She was the first to speak again.

"Well, what's the matter?" she asked.

He drew in a long, incredulous breath. He exhaled noisily, and a bouquet of whiskey transpired into the inadequate room.

"Hell!" he muttered.

Beulah frowned, flushing with a beginning anger.

"What's the matter with you!" she cried. "I don't care whether you like it or not! I'm going! Do you think I intend to live like this all my life? I don't suppose there's anything to be expected from you—well, I'll get the kind of a job I want all right and do what I want to myself! I'm going to be like other girls, going to have all the clothes and things they have. Why can't I? You must think I'm dumb! Well, I'm not so dumb as you think. You can do just what you please, but I'm—"

He let her go on, he paid no heed to the significance of her words, but her speech entered his ears like a music. For years unused to response to anything of charm, now he was charmed with the sound of her voice that in this revealing moment was a part of her fascination.

Leaning back in his chair he regarded her with half-closed eyes, perceiving the contours of her face with a voluptuous pride. Something from his early days, from his forgotten youth, was retrieved for him, an old capacity to be stirred, to be moved. Her smooth cheeks, her touching red lips, the sweep of her abundant yellow hair, the excitement of her eager blue eyes, the rapid dilations of her slim white throat, aroused him with a dim delight. It was incredible; she was his daughter! Somehow she had become a flower; his

daughter! The realization of her charm came like a miraculous gift, unbelievable, yet true!

Then his ears began to catch some meanings from the flood of her torrential words. For a moment more he allowed her to continue, finding a secret pleasure in her misunderstanding. He smiled with an expression of cunning.

Raising his hand suddenly, he put a stop to her speech.

"Have I said anything?" he asked, with a slow smile. "What are you carrying on with me for, Booie? Why don't you give me a chance to say somethin'?"

He paused, still smiling at her, still watching her face.

A second later he stood up and brought his fist down upon the table, rattling the dishes violently; a saucer slid off to the floor and was splintered into fragments.

"Sure!" he exclaimed. "Sure you are! I'll send you anywhere you want to go! You're going to have it better than other chickens. You've got to be a lady!"

Her quick smile delighted him, but more than anything else the inspiration of his concluding words moved him to an unused pleasure. He was startled at the unexpected rush of his imagination. Strange, new thoughts flooded his slow mind. A lady! Tremendous thought! For the first time in his life he felt strong and knew the power of ambition. He had no plans, but he would accomplish it; nothing less for her!

She still smiled at him, watching his face with a calculating scrutiny. Fortunately for her, she thought, he had been approached when his alcoholic mood was favourable to her purposes.

Her eye passed over the fatuous grin that wavered on his lips, the watery, unsteady eyes, the red, wrinkled face. A strong sense of contempt struggled for outward expression; she restrained a wish to sneer, in the fear that he might understand her inward thoughts. In a measure, she was hopeful. He was always half-way drunk; in the end

it was bound to affect him. Perhaps now he was growing a little silly. That was fortunate; it would make him easy to manage.

Nothing further passed between them that evening. Beulah had an engagement and she left the old man smoking his pipe, his feet elevated on a rickety chair, his eyes staring at the ceiling. He watched her go out and chuckled to himself as he listened to her departing footsteps. These were moments of indefinite, agreeable musing.

His mind was never very clear about anything; it was full now of pleasant confusion.

He sat very quiet for a long time, only moving to fill his pipe several times whilst he indulged his vague dreams. He even began to see something ahead for himself, as well as for Beulah. When she was a lady he probably would not work any more; they would live in a different place and the whole day would be his to enjoy her good fortune. The room was dark; his repeated smiles were obscured in the dusk; the smoke of his pipe lay in misty layers in the still air.

## II

THE next day he went to work charged with obscure satisfactions. Going to the little closet where he kept his mops and pails, he pulled out a bucket preparatory to cleaning the office windows. His actions were mechanical and deliberate; his mind had other concerns. While he was rumaging in the closet, old Silkworth, the boss, passed and nodded to him.

He returned the salutation and, disinclined to work, he leaned on the handle of a mop, idly watching the old patent medicine king as he made his way through the office. He had been with Silkworth for years; they had grown old together; he recalled when the boss used to help fill the homeopathic vials with those small triturates of milk sugar, labeled according to the disease they were asserted to correct.

In a dull way he understood that the

boss, for old time's sake, probably had some affection for him, otherwise he would have been replaced by a more efficient janitor. In sentimental admiration he kept his eyes on the moving figure, who had once been nearly as poor as himself. What a lot of money the old boy had made out of nothing!

In this position he saw Silkworth pause at the desk of a new stenographer, a girl who had come into the office only a few days before. He saw his boss lean confidentially over the girl's shoulder, his hand resting fatherly on her arm. The little stenographer looked up, smiling provocatively.

The janitor grinned. Old Silkworth was never tired; he had the spirit of a young buck! The janitor recalled numbers of his amusing amours: his three wives, the red-haired girl who was awarded damages for breach of promise, the dusky eyed Frenchwoman who had threatened him with a small revolver—that must have been a decade ago, now—before the whole office, the great blonde who flashed into view for a few weeks and disappeared at last after cashing a raised cheque. Women were his disastrous diversion. At any rate, he never lost his interest, he never seemed disillusioned, and he always had plenty of money to pull himself out of his difficulties.

The boss and the little stenographer were still in conversation. She looked up at him with tantalizing innocence; the janitor grinned again. Another one! The old man could never resist these small blondes!

"I wonder how much she'll cost him," he muttered.

At that instant the girl laughed, threw her head to the side, and the sunlight, falling over her yellow hair, illuminated it with copper fires. Something in the colour of her voice, her gestures, the glints of her hair, reminded him of Beulah. A pleasant emotion stirred in his dull mind, followed by an inspiring thought.

Silkworth left the desk of the little stenographer, continued through the office and entered his private room.

The janitor took up his mop and pail and walking slowly back to the hydrant, filled the vessel with water. Again his movements were entirely mechanical; he was endeavouring to co-ordinate his new ideas. Again and again he paused, leaned on the mop, stared at the floor, absorbed in difficult thought.

At last, abandoning his implements, he returned to the office and passed in among the desks with a hesitant tread, pausing outside the boss's door. Finally he knocked and at the proper bidding, turned the knob and went in.

Old Silkworth was alone, seated at his desk, smoking a long slim cigar.

"Good morning, sir," said the janitor.

"Good morning, Jim. What can I do for you?"

"I've been with you for a long time, Mr. Silkworth . . ."

"Certainly Jim. What is it you want?"

"I was thinkin' about a job . . ."

The boss looked up at his face in surprise.

"I don't mean for meself," he went on. "You see, I've got a girl—"

He paused, finding words difficult. Silkworth waited with an easy patience.

"You see," the janitor repeated, "I want to get something better for my daughter. I thought maybe—you see, my idea was maybe you had something here . . ."

The boss smiled.

"Time flies—eh, Jim? I remember now, you did have a daughter. The last I heard of her she was a little girl. Grown up now? What can she do?"

"Well, she beginnin' to study at one of those business schools; I thought you might have some sort of a clerk's job or something."

He paused expectantly.

Silkworth continued to smile amiably.

"I don't know," he answered. "Suppose you bring her in to see me, any day—tomorrow morning if you want to. It might be I could make an opening."

The janitor shifted from foot to foot, grinned, muttered his thanks. He turned and left the room with awkward movements. As he emerged to the outer office, his drooping eyelids were narrowed to a cunning squint; he observed no one, completely preoccupied with his thoughts. He was surprised at his own cleverness, and repeatedly, before the day was over, he paused in his work to rub his hands together in a gesture of self-satisfaction. He had the pleasurable emotions of one who achieves some shrewd stroke of policy.

When he arrived home that evening Beulah was putting dinner on the table. He glanced at her cautiously, for some reason afraid to meet her eye. At the table he ate in silence, staring down into his plate, refraining from the pleased chuckle that trembled on his lips. It was not until he pushed back the dishes in front of him that he fixed his gaze on his daughter's face, an unsteady and mysterious smile widening his lips. She became aware of his scrutiny; she frowned a little.

"What's the matter with you?" she inquired.

For a moment he did not answer.

Then, narrowing his eyes once more, with the expression of cunning already familiar to them, he spoke enigmatically.

"Git you fixed up," he said.

"What do you mean? What are you talking about?"

"No need for any of them schools," he said. "He'll fall for you!"

"Come on now!" she exclaimed, impatiently. "What is it you're trying to say?"

"Doll yourself up tomorrow morning," he said. "We're going to see the old man!"

"Who?"

"He'll give you the kind of job you want. Talked to 'm today. You've got it all over that little chicken in the office. Be nice to him. Just the beginning . . ."

Beulah examined her father's face with a shrewd glance. Evidently there was really something he wanted to tell

her. He was no more drunk than usual. She leaned across the table and questioned him sharply.

Presently she understood; old Silkworth had practically given his word to employ her.

For a few seconds she pouted her lips thoughtfully, tapping the table with the tips of her short fingers. Possibilities began to present themselves, a light suffused itself through her understanding. He was a game old fool—and other girls had succeeded easily. Suddenly she sprang up and, circling the table rapidly, she threw her arms about her father's neck, and touched his forehead with a light kiss.

"Honest, you're getting clever, Pop!" she exclaimed. "My chance!"

The next morning she arose early, ironed her best dress—a fluffy affair made out of cheap, pink tulle—, slipped it on eagerly, and then, in front of a stained mirror, propped up on the table, she practiced what artifices she could upon her face. She was never so fastidious; once the rouge was too thick and she washed it off; another time too little and in adding more she passed the maximum again. Holding a lighted match under a cold teacup, she collected the deposit of carbon, and with the rounded end of a hairpin touched a bit of the black to her eyelids. This made her blue eyes mysterious.

Presently they left together; they walked silently, side by side. The girl looked cheaply pretty in the morning sunlight, with an allure compounded of her mysterious youth, and her precocious sophistication. Her eyes were bright, her lips a little parted, as if half uttered words were lingering there, whilst her face was touched with an expression of expectation.

Within, she was excited; a momentous adventure lay before her. She had no fears; she was fully confident. Already there were visions of a new life in her head, passing rapidly, chasing one upon another like the play of colours in a whirling crystal. She saw herself in hats with long, expensive plumes, slim suede shoes, high-heeled

and silver buckled, soft dresses intricate with handworked beading. Her imagination expanded with luxurious vision. She walked half a step in front of the old man at her side, and never once thought of him.

He was indulging his new and indefinite emotions. He was acutely aware of his daughter, of her nearness, of her slim youth, her uplifted head, her demeanour that seemed superior. The component parts of his feelings were beyond his analysis; they were a blend of admiration, of pride, of hope, of mystery, and of wonder.

For him, too, life had suddenly opened a new threshold. His wonder arose from the strange daring of his spirit. He had never expected anything for himself—and now, some curious courage charged him with immeasurable expectancies for Beulah. The old, satisfying word repeated itself in his ears. A lady! He smiled; he uttered a low, pleased laugh.

### III

THEY reached the office; old Silkworth had not yet arrived. The janitor did not begin his work but seated on a bench with his daughter, he compared her with the other women present, to their individual disparagement. Presently he caught sight of the boss coming in through the front door. He stood up. Beulah arose also, assuming a demure smile. Silkworth saw them, approached them; Beulah was introduced.

"All right, Jim," he said. "I'll take your little girl into my office and talk to her. Maybe we'll have no trouble in finding a place."

He watched them walk off, side by side. Beulah was smiling up into his face, with something of the expression seen in the countenance of the little stenographer the day before. Old Silkworth bent down to her with almost gallant gestures. His pleasure was evident.

At last the janitor, seeing them disappear, turned away, and full of con-

fidence, went to the closet that housed the implements of his activities. Presently he was sweeping up the floors with an astonishing new energy.

An hour later Beulah caught him in a corridor, squeezed his hands a moment and explained her good fortune in rapid whispers.

"Great stuff!" she exclaimed. "Private secretary—that's me! Told him I didn't know anything about running a machine and he said to leave that to an ordinary typist. Believe me, I put it over, Pop! Tonight he's taking me out to dinner to explain some of the business stuff I've got to learn!"

She laughed sardonically, clicked her tongue against the roof of her mouth several times, as if to convey some thought not appropriate to words, and then, as swiftly as she had appeared, she ran back to the office.

Entering, she gave old Silkworth another of her shy, yet suggestive smiles. She was, as before, assured, wholly confident. He arose from his desk, approached the little table he had given her, and patted her shoulder familiarly.

"Think you'll like it here, little girl?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, Mr. Silkworth!"

"I'll try to make it pleasant for you. I like young faces around me."

"That's because you're — you're young yourself!"

She raised her yellow head and met his eyes for an instant. Her lips curved in two reddened lines. An old, familiar warmth stirred him as he looked at her. She was so young, so fresh, so touching! He liked these young girls, with the sweetness of their immature lives. Regarding her speculatively, it seemed to him that such a one as her could, in a measure, renew the youth and charm of life for a tired old man of many disappointments. He recalled his last wife; he sighed faintly. She had almost disillusioned him as to women!

By his own observation in the days that followed, the janitor was made aware of Beulah's progress. The sec-

ond week of her employment he was not surprised to see her emerge from the private office with the boss at her side; these two went out together and a second later the sound of the boss's car was heard outside the windows. He looked about the office in an attitude of triumph. He met the stares of the stenographers with a grin that was half a leer. They had failed; Beulah was the successful one.

Now, as he walked the streets to and from his work, he eyed the little girls who passed him critically. None of them was a lady. A huge, formless pride grew greater and greater in his dull brain. When he drank in the bar-rooms he avoided his friends, finding it more agreeable to stand alone, smiling to himself. Occasionally he even gave a thought to his own benefits. Presently he felt that he would not have to work any more.

A month passed.

One evening, entering their little flat, he found the rooms deserted; Beulah had not arrived.

After a while he discovered a note waiting for him on the kitchen table.

He opened it and spelled out the news with difficulty.

"Dear Dad," it said. "Mr. Silkworth and I are going to be married this afternoon. Then we leave for the shore on our honeymoon. I'm enclosing a little present for you. Gee, but it's a great life!"

He was not surprised, but this was more than he had hoped. His admiration for Beulah was augmented; she was more clever than he had supposed. She had secured more than most of the old man's other girls—and probably, since the old boy was well along now, she would be his last wife.

He heard nothing more from her for several weeks. During this time he thought of the agreeable days to come. He imagined his pleasure in being near his daughter, unobtrusive but observant, watching her in the triumphs she would have, pleasing his eyes with the visions of her pretty clothes, her servants, her maids, her car in which she

would occasionally drive him through the streets. He would expect little; only to be the witness of her success would suffice. A small room for himself in their house, somewhere to smoke his pipe in rest and content—and the continued spectacle of her good fortune.

His ways became softer, his voice less harsh; in a measure he began to dream vaguely of being a gentleman. To do nothing, to live in surroundings that were luxurious, to see his pretty Beulah all in silk and handsome colours—this was a gentlemanly life!

At last he found himself impatient for her return. But no further word arrived. Then, one morning, he saw old Silkworth back in the office, but no sign of Beulah. That evening another letter was waiting for him at home.

She enclosed him some money and told him it was not necessary for him to go to work any more. But she said nothing about seeing him, made no mention of their reunion. This puzzled him somewhat, but he satisfied his wonder with several obscure explanations and waited in patience for Beulah to send for him. Now he had nothing to do, and plenty of leisure to indulge his vague, pleasurable dreams.

But several weeks passed and there was no further word. Another cheque arrived, without any accompanying letter. His wonder deepened; perhaps she did not realize that he wanted to be with her. Naturally; she could not understand his inner thoughts. She had no knowledge of his pride, nor the pleasure that the sight of her present life would bring to him.

Finally he determined to go to her. He knew she was living at the famous Towers, Silkworth's suburban home. Dressed in a new black suit, with shined shoes, a carefully shaved face, his hair brushed, his hands meticulously washed, he set out one morning on this adventure. In the train he slowly evolved pictures of their meeting.

She would be glad to see him; she would be touched by his coming. He was almost tremulous with excitement when he stepped off the train, and look-

ing up the long hill in front of him, saw the gables of the Towers rising above the tall trees. This was *her* home now, his daughter's—a lady!

He walked along the edge of the drive, mounted the broad steps, pulled the old-fashioned bell. Presently a man in uniform answered his ring and stared at him in some surprise.

"I want to see Mrs. Silkworth," he said. "Tell her her father is here."

The footman hesitated a moment, then stepped aside for him to come in. He stood near a gilt chair in the hall, waiting. His heart warmed at the sight of the luxurious appointments amongst which she lived.

After a short time the footman returned. He held a paper in his hand; the old man took it. He saw that it was another cheque.

"Mrs. Silkworth is very sorry," said the man, "but she won't be able to see you today."

The father hesitated a moment before he turned to go out through the door. His senses were suddenly dull, as if in that instant some physical blow had stunned his capacity for thought and feeling. Mechanically he retraced his steps along the gravelled drive. One hand fingered the cheque in his pocket.

Nearby he turned into a bar-room; he called for whiskey. The place was very quiet, beyond the noise of the city; only a few men stood about talking in low voices. The whiskey warmed him; he drank more.

And then, by some process of spontaneous illumination, he began to understand. He lifted his head; the pain did not go from his heart, but the sense of cruelty, of wanton hurt, slowly departed.

He poured out another glass of whiskey.

It was natural; she could not see him! She had passed from his world; she was gone forever. His hopes were stupid and absurd. What could she do with him; he would disgrace her! Half a smile, half a grimace, shaped itself on his moist lips. His old pride

in her rushed back, increased, augmented. Her act was the final proof . . .

He looked about him; he felt a profound contempt for the shoddy figures that drank at the bar.

"Hey!" he suddenly exclaimed. "Listen! Do y' think my daughter'd see me? *Me?* Maybe you've got a daughter—go and talk to her then. She'll

see you—you won't be any disgrace to her. That's *your* daughter! *Mine* can't see *me!* Never! My daughter's a *lady!*"

He peered at the figures about him, as if through a fog, seeking to find on their faces the marks of their deep chagrin. He laughed, he pounded on the bar, he called for the bottle of whiskey.



## Understanding

By Muna Lee

WE have made no promises: there are none to break,

We have not steeped our soul in dream, so we have no fear to wake.  
But clearer than words can utter, farther than words can go,  
Triumphing over silence and space, shines one fixed truth we know.



ONE trouble with the world is that too many married people are leading single lives, and too many single people are leading double lives.



I NEVER knew but one man who told everyone that advertising didn't pay. He put an advertisement in a matrimonial paper and got a wife!



WHEN a man moons around all day it is a sign he is in love. When a woman moons around all day it is a sign she is no longer in love.



LOVE is a sugared pill. Marriage is a sugared pill after the sugar has worn off.



NO woman is ever original enough to think up a new way of kissing when she marries her second husband.

# Le Petit Exil

By Han Ryner

PAR ce dimanche d'été lourd et orageux, comment m'étais-je laissé entraîner à ces fêtes bruyantes? Sous un soleil torride, que mes compagnons déclaraient "presque méridional", je m'étais arrêté avec la foule en différents points de la ville de Sceaux et, devant des bustes minuscules, j'avais entendu bourdonner d'interminables discours. A travers la torpeur que tissaient autour de moi chaleur et rhétorique, quelques mots, plus souvent répétés sans doute, étaient seuls parvenus à mon esprit. Mais, dans les paroles confusément des orateurs qui se suivaient et se ressemblaient comme des frères criards, "petite patrie" et "grande patrie", s'étaient-elles affrontées hostilement ou amoureusement enlacées? Détail que j'ignorais, et, à dire tout le vrai, il m'importait peu. Leurs luttes ou leurs enlacements m'avaient causé une intense migraine et, si je n'aimais héroïquement toutes mes patries, j'aurais été capable de garder rancune à ces deux-là.

Dans le train du retour bondé et étouffant, un lourd Marseillais ronflait sur mon épaule meurtrie. En face de moi, un jeune homme mince, blanc et rose comme une fille du Nord, au poil rare et d'un blond blafard. Du Midi, celui-là? On avait peine à le croire, quand, par hasard, il se trisait. Aussi faisait-il résonner presque continuellement un accent provençal, si excessif...

Ses paroles m'étaient odieuses: il râbâchait encore de grande et de petite patrie, l'insupportable garçon! Mais ce n'était là qu'un exorde qui, selon la pente naturelle aux bavards, allait le conduire à des confidences sur son intéressante personne.

Je ne tardai guère à savoir qu'Achille

Blagard, né en Avignon, aimait sa petite patrie au point d'avoir beaucoup souffert quand il avait subi "le petit exil".

Le petit exil!... Le bizarrerie de la formule m'amusa et je me surpris à écouter. Une narration commençait, où le conteur par instants me sembla spirituel, quoique trop fréquemment, hélas! il s'appliquât à parler comme un livre... comme un livre prétentieux et traduit d'une langue à la fois mièvre et grandiloque. Dame! c'est un peu mêlé — telle une bouillabaisse — la verve de là-bas...

Voici ce que disait, d'un accent trop provençal, le jeune homme trop blanc et trop rose, au trop rare et trop blafard:

\* \* \*

— Oui, monsieur, le hasard taquin et la volonté indifférente de mes chefs m'avaient envoyé dans une petite ville franc-comtoise.

D'abord, avec cet amour du changement qui caractérise la prime jeunesse, j'avais goûté ta grâce calme, ô blanche sous-préfecture assise parmi les prairies, au bord de la Saône sinuuse, lente, comme attardée en un enlacement d'amour.

Puis ta forêt, toute voisine, m'avait appelé de son murmure, nombreux et chuchoteur comme ma Méditerranée quand elle s'endort dans les bras du soir.

J'allais par un sous-bois profond et dense... Trop profond et trop dense, peut-être... Oui, monsieur, un peu trop de ténèbre, un peu trop de mystère, comme un poids d'ombre et d'inconnu... Je me souviens: ma joie se tigrat d'inquiétude.

Mais voici. Dans le beauté sombre, une clairière s'ouvrit, lumière et sourire. Entre de larges divans de gazon, une source gazouillait, claire et fraîche comme une voix de jeune fille.

Je m'allongeai, songeur, dans ce paradis.

Une ivresse ancienne se mêlait à mon enchantement. Je me rappelais, moins beau et moins pénétrant, me semblait-il, un paysage de chez moi : une source un peu pauvre dans un bosquet un peu petit, parmi de l'herbe un peu rare et un peu rase.

Malgré le parfum d'enfance et de ce souvenir, je m'appliquais à être impartial et je monologuais avec une justice de cosmopolite :

— Ici, c'est plus complet, plus voluptueux. Mieux que celle bue dans l'entrelacement puéril de mes petits doigts, cette eau mérite le nom poétique de *Fontaine d'Amour*.

Une chanson jolie et pas lointaine du tout me fit relever la tête. J'aperçus, à quelque pas, un jeune paysan de formes âpres et robustes.

— Comment s'appelle ce délicieux endroit ? lui demandai-je.

— Ça, me fut-il répondu dans un rire, c'est un canton bien connu des garçons et des filles at ça s'appelle la *Fontaine de Trousse-Cotillon*.

Héurte par ces syllabes gauloists, je compris tout ce qui manquait à ce paysage pour égaler la grâce provençale. Il lui manquait, tonnerre de l'air ! il lui manquait, tonnerre de l'air ! il lui manquait la poésie et la delicatesse des indigènes.

\* \* \*

Après ces paroles— définitives, n'est-ce pas ? — Blagard se reposait, comme Dieu, le septième jour.

Je lui adressai une objection :

— Tout à l'heure, à Sceaux, je vous ai entendu dire que vous aimiez beaucoup Paris.

— Oh ! comme c'est différent ! s'écria-t-il, les mains vers le plafond. Paris, monsieur, mais c'est la plus grande ville du Midi, et la plus belle, et la plus vraiment méridionale. Nous y sommes plus de provençaux que dans cette odieuse et cosmopolite Marseille, par exemple. Marseille, première Echelle du Levant.

Il n'en dit pas davantage.

Depuis quelques instants, le Marseillais, lourd à mon épaule, ne ronflait plus. Il s'agitait comme un homme qui se réveille.

L'injure faite à sa ville le dressa, superbe d'indignation. Péremptoire, il ordonna :

— Cesse donc tes mensonges, stupide météque belge.

Achille Blagard fut pareil à un homme qui n'entend pas. Toute son attention était prise par le dehors. Justement on entrat dans une gare.

— Déjà Montsouris ! s'étonna-t-il. Je demeure tout près d'ici.

Il sauta sur le quai, disparut, tandis que le Marseillais, haussant des épaules aussi fortes que dédaigneuses :

— Ce n'est pas Montsouris qu'il habite, le menteur ! C'est Montmartre.

Il ajouta :

— Si ça ne fait pas pitié !... Cet Achille Blagard est né à Lille. Son père venait d'Anvers et sa mère arrivait d'Ostende.

Il y eut un vacillement dans les yeux du parleur, une hésitation tremblante sur ses lèvres. Puis il reprit :

— Oui, monsieur, d'Ostende... Et si je n'ajoute pas : "Dans une bourriche", c'est parce quo, nous autres de Marseille, nous ne frappons jamais une femme, même avec une fleur.

Et il conclut, l'homme de Marseille :

— Voyez-vous, quand quelqu'un qui se dit méridional se montre bavard, vantard et indiscret, on peut être sûr qu'il n'est pas bon teint... C'est à ces caractères que ja reconnaiss les hommes du Nord.



# The Coming of the Censor

By George Jean Nathan

TO anyone with half an eye it becomes evident that a censorship of the American stage, akin to the British, is close upon us. Six weeks ago, indeed, the cornerstone was laid at a national conference in New York of license commissioners, police commissioners and directors of public safety herded together from various parts of the country. That, in a nation which already, either as a whole or in part, holds it immoral and illegal to play a game of solitaire on a railway train, to drink a bit of sherry, to exhibit a painting of Felicien Rops, to read "Lysistrata," to throw a leather ball on a Sunday, to wear a stuffed bird on a bonnet and to have dinner with one's mother-in-law in a private dining-room—that in such a nation a stage censorship should have been deferred as long as this is surely a matter for wonderment. That a nation of this high cultural sensitiveness should consider it subversive of the public morality to publish the discreetly related amours of Orelay lovers and yet pass without so much as a lift of the eye-lash the stage presentation of divers "Please Get Marrieds" with their bald boudoir peep-shows has long been as difficult of understanding as that a national metropolis which regards it immoral and illegal to ride through its principal park in a taxicab with the blinds drawn fails to regard it immoral and illegal to strip a woman on the stage down to within an inch of her omphalos.

To most of us, of course, there is approximately the same measure of immorality in the stage spectacle of a peeled female as there is, say, in

"The 'Genius'" or a glass of beer, but it is another thing to reconcile, on the part of our professional arbiters of art, life and letters, the indifference to the one and the horror at the latter. That, however, straws are blowing in the wind has long since been unmistakable. For already by but curiously intermittent ukase have bare legs been sheathed in the Winter Garden, have Edward Knoblauch, Paul Potter, et al., been operated upon, has the hooch been removed from hoochie-coochie on burlesque stages. And hence not less unmistakable is the rapid approach of the day when—as in England at the present time—Tolstoi's renamed "Redemption" may not be presented under that title on the ground that the title may be taken as reflecting upon the Lord Jesus Christ!

What will this censorship and its chief surgeons be like? It is reasonably safe to assume that this power of censorship will be vested, in so far as New York is concerned, in a committee somewhat smaller than the current Mayor's Committee, the present semi-official blue pencil. This smaller body—it will in all probability contain three members—will, if the present relevant statistics count for anything, be composed of (1) some amiable old dodo from Brooklyn whose luncheon consists of a bar of milk chocolate, (2) some obstreperous pulpit jackass whose nose is constantly smelling for easy notoriety, and (3) some perfectly ignorant, if perfectly honest, police official of a bacteriological rather than an artistic culture. On some such triumvirate as this will the business of stage censorship devolve.

And with the obvious result that the triumvirate in question will, like the average dramatic critic, concern itself vastly less with reporting the impression that this or that play makes upon it than with the impression it makes on this or that play.

What will follow will be a rich shambles. All the idiocies of the current motion picture censorship will be repeated in the instance of theatrical entertainment. It will become promptly unlawful for murder to be shown upon the stage, thus doing away with such pernicious drama as Shakespeare's; for forgery, thus doing away with the debasing drama of Ibsen; for drinking, so banning such lewd spectacles as Gorki's and Bernard Shaw's; for illicit love, thus excommunicating the obscene Schnitzler; for thievery, thus bouncing the evil Hauptmann; for sacrilege, so shooing out Andreyev and Brieux; and for contempt of the courts, thus cashiering Galsworthy. It will doubtless become unlawful as well to exhibit the female leg above the kneecap and the female bosom below the Adam's apple. It will suddenly become inimical to public morality to intimate that the bed is ever a coeducational institution. And an official premium will meanwhile be placed upon all the uplift slops wherein life is pictured as a Y. M. C. A. and love as a Maltese mewling.

Intelligent censorship would be, in the American theater, a welcome thing. Give us a censorship committee composed of such fellows as Huneker, James Branch Cabell, and Parker of the Boston *Transcript*—or one composed, say, of Francis Hackett, Barrett Clark and young Eugene O'Neill—and the quality of the American stage would be as rapidly bettered as if three-quarters of our current American playwrights, producers and actors were given adequate doses of bichloride of mercury. A censorship that would rid the stage of the dangerous immorality of the

junk that presently besmears it, a censorship that would instantly give the gate to a play that was cheaply imagined and badly written, a censorship that would regard as inimical to the public welfare the kind of exhibit in which the \$150,000 mortgage on the farm is lifted through a belief in God—such a censorship would surely be a fetching one. But any censorship that directs itself toward a protection of the ignorant, that holds the virtue of Sophie Bingbaum, a Gimbel package wrapper, a matter of greater importance than the artistic integrity of Edmond Rostand, that believes the sight of a silk stocking is sufficient to send Clayton Hamilton straight to hell—any such censorship is as profound a parody as are the novels of Dorothy Richardson. . . . Here, of course, I am guilty of setting forth pretty ripe platitudes but—set a platitude to catch a platitude.

The gestures of the coming censorship may easily be anticipated. In the first place, the censors, believing that such things as strip tights and bare legs are of a high cantharidian power, will forthwith descend upon our music show producers and summon them, under threat of heavy penalty, immediately to put their girls in long skirts and stockings. This is always the initial whang, and clearly illustrative of the censors' obtuseness. Nothing in the world is so utterly non-cantharidian as these same strip tights and these same bare legs. And nothing, by the same mark, so greatly the reverse as that very thing upon which the censors will blockheadedly insist. The most moral spectacle this side of Oberammergau is a burlesque show like Billy Watson's or Al Reeves', with the girls encased in flesh-coloured sausage skins that show up every bump, bulb and bone. In such a case, nothing is left to the imagination—not even the girl. The effect, therefore, even upon the button-hole makers and sailors who attend these exhibitions, is as thoroughly moral as

that of one of Old Dr. Grindle's wax Louvres.

This holds equally true on the higher plane of the music show stage. For one Johnnie who is to be observed waiting at the stage door for a classic dancer, you will find two dozen waiting for one of the chorus girls in the "Fashionable Finishing School" number. The long skirt, the lingerie and the silk stocking, swished at the youth of the nation from a brilliantly lighted, highly coloured platform, are the real trouble makers. A "Follies" dancer swathed in piquing silks and laces is of ten times greater horsepower in pulling a college boy from his moorings than some such very nearly nude dancer as La Sylphe in "The Scandals of 1919." Who, indeed, since the Civil War has ever heard any one protest against the strip tight clad trapeze ladies and bareback riders in the circuses? A foxy body of censors, a body composed of men of sharp understanding, would seek, therefore, not to cover up nudity, but would insist upon exposing it. Nothing would so quickly improve the morality of the theatergoing public as a summary censorship order to the Shuberts immediately to bare all the legs in the Winter Garden up to the hips and to Ziegfeld forthwith to strip off his girls' immoral frocks completely.

Turning to dramatic entertainment, we will find the censors condemning all such plays as "Androcles" on the ground of irreligion and approving of all such as "Ben Hur" on the ground of religious uplift. Yet what are the facts? The facts are that such a play as "Androcles" is actually the religious uplift play and that such a one as "Ben Hur" is actually the irreligious play. The good Christian, sitting before such a play as "Androcles," finds his faith strengthened by Shaw's poking fun at it. He finds himself at first perhaps indignant, then challenged and on guard, then pitting his own arguments against

the stage arguments projected against him, then triumphing over the latter if not by logic at least by the sheer stubborn power of his picadored belief, trust and faith. (No one comprehends this subtle hokum better than such a wag as Shaw.) And thus the viewer of a play like "Androcles" finds his faith anew as one ever finds one's strength when that strength is offered defiance.

But in the case of a play like "Ben Hur," the good Christian leaves the theater much as he entered it. His faith is not strengthened in the least; it is not left even as strong as it was before. And why? Very simply and very obviously because nothing is strengthened save by trial and because without such test and trial, as by inactivity ever, there inevitably follows flabbiness, weakness and—eventually—a more or less complete debility. What doesn't uplift, depresses. If the world's clergy were for the next year of Sundays to preach the doctrine of Christian *laissez faire*, the churches would at the end of that time be wholly deserted and converted into jazz parlours and bachelor apartments. What keeps the churches alive is the clergy's constant challenging of its flock, its constant reply to doubt, its constant militarism.

A sagacious censorship would have keen perception of this, as it would of the equally general and misreckoned attitudes of censorship toward the theatrical exhibition of adultery, murder and the other sins and crimes of the body politic. To prohibit adultery in the drama on the theory that it is corrupting of the public morality is the last word in absurdity. The theory that the exhibition of adultery in such a play as "The King" inspires the theatergoer to the commission of adultery is quite as sensible as the theory that the exhibition of suicide by jumping out of the window in such a play as "Mid-Channel" inspires the theatergoer to the commission of suicide by jumping out of the window.

The notion that because a man or woman sees adultery pictured pleasantly upon the stage he or she will become personally hospitable to adultery is further akin to the notion that because a man or woman sees murder pictured pleasantly on the stage (as, for example, in "Kismet") he or she will suffer a desire to go right out and drown someone.

The more pleasantly a thing is pictured in the theater, the less pleasant and convincing it seems to the audience. This appears at first glance to be a mere strain for paradox, but it is nothing of the kind. The boomerang of contrasting values has long been understood by the theatrical psychologist. The noble line "Rags are royal raiment when worn for virtue's sake"—a stunning joke-fletcher—has long since provoked a low derisive roar. "Ten Nights in a Barroom" would today, even in a nation whose great majority believes in its uplifting thesis, be hooted off the stage by an audience however anæsthetic to its ridiculous literary quality. But these are examples perhaps somewhat outdated and far afield. Let us come down to the moment. A protracted, rapturous and blissful kiss provokes an audience to the labial manufacture of quizzical smacking noises. Neri, the blissful gloriator in lust and blood, makes an audience snicker. (Yet, though the intent of the text is the opposite, the play is a popular success. This, relevantly, is usually and naturally the case.) It is not the pleasantly pictured thievery in "Turn To the Right" that strikes the audience pleasantly, but the honourable impulse behind that thievery. "Romeo and Juliet," the most enthralling love story ever told, is ever remembered by a theatrical audience less for its glamorously projected love than for its tragedy. Contrariwise, the overpowering grief of Maurya provokes a warm glow, as does the tragic end of Toni Weber. The pleasantly pictured and happy adultery of Trenwith and Iris makes

an audience feel "sad." The sweeping happiness of Hauptmann's *Otterbege* in her loving resolve to sacrifice herself for Heinrich repels a theater audience. Nothing could be more pleasant than carnal sin as it is set forth in such a play as Capus' "Wounded Bird," yet nothing could impress an American audience as less pleasant. Nothing could be more pleasant than sin as it is pictured by Magda and the Countess Beata, yet the persuasion of the theater audience is negligible. And nothing, on the other hand, could seem more charming to an Anglo-Saxon audience than the unpleasantly pictured vice of a Rita Cavallini and her early Beppo in some such great box-office instrument as Edward Sheldon's "Romance."

All such values our coming censorship—as all censorship—will distort and confound. The day that it is instituted, parents had best keep a sharp eye on their young sons and daughters!

## II

IN the new Capitol Theater there was recently exhibited a motion picture named "The Eternal Triangle," the story of which was enacted entirely by dogs. And not merely enacted—as the average Broadway play is enacted by the bipedal mime—but enacted intelligently, vividly and, in spots, almost brilliantly. I can, indeed, at the moment think of no more than six American actors who could have given a performance of the leading role any more effective than that vouchsafed it by the amazing Airedale hund who was engaged for the part. Here, plainly enough, we have a new light upon the actor and the business of acting. Those who are happy to regard acting as a high art, as an art calling for acumen, imagination, inventiveness and a lofty craftsmanship and fancy, must surely find here something slightly confounding. Imagine a dog taking Mozart's place!

That the dog may be the actor of the future is perhaps an even easier assumption than that maintained by such champions of the marionette as Gordon Craig and Anatole France. Whatever my misgivings personally, it is only fair to admit that there are many indications that point in this direction, and these indications are not lightly to be dismissed even by one like myself who finds some difficulty in accepting seriously a theory that wears so absurd a mask. Yet, ridding oneself of prejudice and looking into the problem with as clear an eye as is possible under the apparently grotesque circumstances, one encounters a number of significant facts. In the first place, this dog performance of the story of the "eternal triangle," regarded from the soundest level of criticism, is superior in almost every detail of dramatic projection to the recent local projection of any play dealing with the "eternal triangle" save alone Emmanuel Reicher's exposition of "Lonely Lives." Compared with the recent acting of "When We Dead Awaken" in the Neighbourhood Playhouse, it is a masterpiece. Compared with the amateur performance of "Aglavaine and Sélysette," another triangle drama, revealed two seasons ago—a veritable histrionic gem.

That the dog is often an excellent actor scarcely needs proof. The brilliant performance of the dog in Frederick Ballard's "Young America" is well remembered. The portrayal of a drunkard by the dog in Officer Vokes' familiar act is immeasurably superior to any American actor's portrayal of a drunken man in the last fifteen years—with perhaps the two exceptions of Edward Fielding in "Your Humble Servant" and Bruce McRae's admirable bit of work in the current "Gold Diggers." The astonishing "Dog Town" act in vaudeville with its company of practised Spitzes needs no citation. The incredibly fine performance of the dog in Alexandra Carlsile's company at the Empire some

nine or ten years ago (I can't remember the name of the play; only the dog's performance remains vivid in my memory); the equally fine performance of a dog in a comedy called "The Young Clarissa," enjoyed by trans-Atlantic voyagers in Milan in 1912; the world famous performance of the dog Francine in the pantomime at the Concert Maillol; the marvelous dog Teddy in the Mack Sennett buffooneries; the compelling dog comedian who bears a remarkable resemblance to the late Weedon Grossmith and serves as the star of the Gaudsmith Brothers' act; the Michael of Miss Laurette Taylor's original "Peg o' My Heart" troupe whose rôle, even the most prejudiced will grant, no actor could have played one-half so well—these provide further testimony to the dawning peril of the current pantaloon. Even as I write, indeed, one of the younger American producers is planning a dramatization of Ollivant's "Bob, Son of Battle," with a well-known circus dog in the star rôle.

What has made "Uncle Tom's Cabin" one of the richest of American theatrical properties? The bloodhounds. For one person who goes to the theater to see the play, there are two who—drawn by flamboyant posters—go to see the dogs. In the instance of such tank town companies as the rôles of the dogs have been played by actors (*vide* C. R. Miller's 1911 enterprise), the companies have quickly gone broke. George Bernard Shaw, so he has told Austin Harrison, had in mind, at the time just before he set to work on "Androcles and the Lion," a Biblical play in which a dog figured conspicuously. He has told Harrison that he abandoned the play because he knew the dog would, in the lingo of the theater, run away with the play and would thus, irritating the vanity of his colleagues, bring Shaw a financial loss by breaking up the company in the middle of the engagement. Shaw therefore de-

cided to write "Androcles," let an actor play the spurious lion, and so insure a peaceful and harmonious acting company.

There are many reasons why the dog makes a good actor. Initially, unlike his bipedal rival, he belongs to no union and hence corrupts his work with no politics. Nor does he squander his time in clubs discussing the toothsomeness of this or that houri and the superiority of Cosmo Hamilton to Ibsen. He is faithful, respectful, eager to serve and to obey. If he does not obey he may be made to obey with a whip, whereas it is illegal to strike an actor in New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Idaho and South Carolina. Even in England, indeed, it is forbidden to hit an actor save with a vegetable. On the Continent, of course, . . .

More and more it becomes manifest that the old order giveth way to the new. In a day like the present, where literacy is no longer essential to the actor, where one of the best actors on our stage actually cannot read and has to learn his lines from a dictaphone, the human mime rapidly gives ground to the canine. We have already seen Thackeray's "Rose and the Ring" enacted beautifully by wooden marionettes; we have already seen "Pomander Walk" done more brilliantly by babies of six and eight years than by its adult company; we have already seen "Othello" done well in the Lafayette Theater by a company composed, aside from its Othello, Iago and Desdemona, of ignorant negro elevator boys and unlettered black laundresses. We have seen that human intelligence may be no more necessary to the business of acting, however essential it may once have been, than it presently is to the become mechanical business of adding up a difficult column of figures and getting fine music out of a piano. The dog has already played an important part in Red Cross work and in the Police Department. And the time is per-

haps not far off when his picture will be adorning the covers of the Theater Magazine, Variety and the Dramatic Mirror.

### III

THE strike of the printers, necessitating the printing of magazines in the far reaches of the country, makes out of the question any degree of timeliness in the reviewing of the transient art goods of Broadway. Among these birds of passage, as I write, is the latest Augustus Thomas masterpiece, "Palmy Days." What we engage here is a heavily sentimental pop at the Bret Harte sort of thing retailed with much of the Thorley rhetoric for which Mr. Thomas is familiar. The play belongs to that period of dramatic writing in which the heroine's identity was established by a photograph in an old locket; in which the erring and vindictive mother, encountering her husband after many years, forbade him to make himself known to their young daughter; in which the father's heart ached to clasp his little one once again in these old arms; and in which the long lost child and the old man eventually met in one of those scenes that was supposed to melt an audience completely.

This package of ancient dodges makes its reappearance in the Thomas opus in toto. And each dodge is projected by the stereotyped dramaturgical machinery. The play never touches life; and its relation to the purely romantic theater is the relation born to that theater not by the drama of authentic romance and fancy but by the drama of rubber stamp ribattuta. Viewing the play with Professor Smith, editor of the Century Magazine, we were brought to the joint conclusion that it represented precisely that kind of writing which, whatever its subject matter, is promptly rejected in a magazine editorial office after a glance at the first page of the manuscript.

The exhibition, an elaboration of a sketch divulged originally in an actors' club, is sponsored by Arthur Hopkins. Well, well, well!

## IV

One of the numerous black marks against my critical ability is the case of Lennox Robinson's play "Patriots" which, produced in Wallack's Theatre in 1912 or thereabout, found me at the moment too idiotic to discern its virtues. I recall that I wrote of the play that, while it contained an excellent idea, its author seemed to me to have lacked the resource and invention to develop that idea, with the result that the manuscript was weak going. What I had in mind, God knows, for the play is actually a well devised and well developed one which, for all its occasionally tepid execution, is worthy of sound respect. I doubt, however, that seven years hence I shall see fit to change my opinion of Robinson's newest work, "The Lost Leader."

This latter reveals anew its author's warm craftsmanship and gently ironical fancy; it tells in exceptionally interesting theatrical terms the legend of an unburied Parnell; it exhibits to this more western world probably one of the best pieces of purely dramatic writing that has recently flowered out of Ireland. Its first two acts are as sensitive examples of drama as the native stage has seen in some time; and if its final act is unduly tractful and mouthy, there is yet in it a curiously suggested mysticism that constantly fingers the attention. Mr. William Harris, Jr., has made a generally effective production of the play which, to repeat, is an ample penance for his "East is West."

## V

"The Unknown Woman," by Marjorie Blaine and Willard Mack out of

an East Side nonesuch by Stanley Lewis (*né* Z. Libin), is trash. A grandchild of such orthodox gems of the yesteryear as "The Wife" and "The Charity Ball," and a child of such more recent rubies as treat of the M. Michel de Latour's sublime refusal to alibi himself out of a charge of murder since otherwise it would become known that he had spent the night in the boudoir of the praiseworthy Mrs. Rosenbaum, the present exhibit discloses itself further as the yokel stencil wherein the male characters interrupt their most important business and professional concerns sentimentally to discuss the heroine and wherein the grand climax is reached when the latter is confronted by her husband, seized by the wrist, flung aside and called a harlot. The enterprise was doubtless designed to serve as a fashion show with Miss Marjorie Rambeau as the chief mannequin. In the midst of the most tragic scenes the actress serenely glides out upon the platform in a succession of costumes that lack only Dave Stamper and Gene Buck to make them relevant.

## VI

Edward Salisbury Field's "Wedding Bells" is a rather spare farce comedy given life by an excellent performance on the part of Miss Margaret Lawrence and nimble staging on the part of Edgar Selwyn. This Miss Lawrence is a most ingratiating comédienne; it is a real pleasure to sit before her. Anything but pretty, with a voice that is anything but dulcet, with a carriage that is anything but graceful, with a taste in frocks that is anything but harmonious and with a method of gesture that is not unlike Fred Stone's, she is yet a thoroughly attractive, and decidedly charming, performer. Without her, Mr. Field's play would be a bell without a tongue.



# The Flood of Fiction

By H. L. Mencken

## I

OF literary reputations a number of distinct varieties are to be distinguished. There is, first of all, the sort of reputation that is high both vertically and horizontally—the sort that tends to convert itself into a racial myth, unchallenged and even unexamined—to wit, the reputation of a Shakespeare, a Goethe, a Molière, a Dante, a Schiller, or, to drop a peg or two, a Tolstoi, a Hugo or a Mark Twain. Secondly, there is the kind that has a wide base but dissolves in sniffs above—the reputation of a Brieux, a Harold Bell Wright, a Lew Wallace, a Richard Harding Davis, an Elbert Hubbard, a Conan Doyle or a D'Annunzio. Thirdly, there is the kind that is brilliant above but shadowy below—the reputation of a Henry James, a Huysmans, a Lafcadio Hearn, a Schnitzler, a Joseph Conrad or a George Gissing. Fourthly, there is the kind that is shadowy up and down—a thing less of public bruitings than of cautious whispers—a diffident, esoteric, Hugo-Wolfish variety—*e. g.*, the reputation of a Max Stirner, an Henri Becque, a Marie Henri Beyle or an Ambrose Bierce....

Bierce is dead, and in America, at least, the post is vacant. I have a fancy that James Branch Cabell will enter into enjoyment of its prerogatives and usufructs. All efforts to make him popular will fail inevitably; he is far too mystifying a fellow ever to enchant the simple folk who delight in O. Henry, Kathleen Norris and Henry van Dyke. Moreover, he writes too well; his English is too voluptuous to be endured; there is nothing ingratiatingly mushy and idiotic about it. Nor is he likely to be

embraced by such *intelligentsia* as disport in the literary weeklies and the women's clubs, for he is not a Deep Thinker, but a Scoffer, and, worse, he scoffs at Sacred Things, including even American Ideals. Nay, there is no hope for Cabell in either direction. If he ever had a chance, his new book, "Jürgen" (*McBride*), has ruined it. "Jürgen," estimated by current American standards, whether of the boobery or of the super-boobery, is everything that is abhorrent. On the negative side, it lacks all Inspiration, all Optimism, all tendency to whoop up the Finer Things; it moves toward no shining Goal; it even neglects to denounce Pessimism, Marital Infidelity, Bolshevism, the Alien Menace and German *Kultur*. And on the positive side it piles up sins unspeakable: it is full of racy and mirthful ideas, it is brilliantly written, it is novel and daring, it is ribald, it is heretical, it is blasphemous, it is Rabelaisian. Such a book simply refuses to fit into the decorous mid-Victorian pattern of American letters. It belongs to some outlandish literature, most probably the French. One might imagine it written by a member of the French Academy, say Anatole France. But could one imagine it written by a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, say Bliss Perry? The thought is not only fantastic; it is almost obscene.

Cabell came near sneaking into refined society, a few years ago, as a novelist. Several of his novels, like the earlier pieces of Hergesheimer, trembled on the verge of polite acceptance. Both writers were handicapped by having ears. They wrote English that was delicately musical and colorful—and hence incurably offensive

to constant readers of Rex Beach, Thomas H. Dixon, and the *New York Times*. Hergesheimer finally atoned for his style by mastering the popular novelette formula; thereafter he was in the *Saturday Evening Post* and the old maids who review books for the newspapers began to praise him. A few weeks ago I received an invitation to hear him lecture before a Browning Society; in a year or two, if he continues to be good, he will be elected to membership in the National Institute of Arts and Letters, in full equality with Ernest Poole, Oliver Herford, Henry Sydnor Harrison and E. W. Townsend, author of "Chimmie Fadden." Cabell, I fear, must resign himself to doing without the accolade. "Beyond Life" spilled many a bean; beneath its rumblings one discerned more than one cackle of satanic laughter. "Jurgen" wrecks the whole beanery. It is a compendium of backward-looking and wrong-thinking. It is a devil's sonata, an infernal *Kindersinfonie* for slap-stick, seltzer-siphon and bladder-on-a-string. . . . And, too, for the caressing violin, the lovely and melancholy flute. How charmingly the fellow writes! What a hand for the slick and slippery phrase he has! How cunningly he winds up a sentence, and then flicks it out with a twist of the wrist—a shimmering, dazzling shower of nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns and prepositions! . . .

It is curious how often the gift of irony is coupled with pedantry. Think of old François and his astounding citations from incredible authorities—almost like an article in a German medical journal. Or of Anatole France. Or of Swift. Cabell, in "Jurgen," borrows all the best hocus-pocus of the professors. He reconstructs an imaginary medieval legend with all the attention to detail of the pundits who publish college editions of "Aucassin et Nicolette," until, toward the end, his own exuberance intoxicates him a bit, he actually makes it seem a genuine translation. But

his Jurgen, of course, is never a medieval man. No; Jurgen is horribly modern. Jurgen is you and I, or you and me, as you choose. Jurgen is the modern man in reaction against a skepticism that explains everything away and yet leaves everything inexplicable. He is the modern man in doubt of all things, including especially his own doubts. So his quest is no heroic enterprise, though it takes him over half the earth and into all the gaudiest and most romantic kingdoms thereof, for the thing that he seeks is not a great hazard and an homeric death but simply ease and contentment, and what he comes to in the end is the discovery that they are nowhere to be found, not even in the arms of a royal princess. Jurgen acquires the shirt of Nessus and the magical sword Caliburn; he becomes Duke of Logreus, Prince Consort in Cocaigne, King of Eubonia, and Emperor of Noumaria; he meets and loves the incomparable Guenevere in the moonlight on the eve of her marriage to King Arthur; he unveils the beauty of Helen of Troy; he is taught all the ineffable secrets of love by Queen Anatolis; he becomes a great poet; he sees strange coasts; he roams the whole universe. But in the end, he returns sadly to a world "wherein the result of every human endeavor is transient and the end of all is death," and takes his old place behind the counter of his pawnshop, and resumes philosophically his interrupted feud with his faded wife, Dame Lisa.

In brief, a very simple tale, and as old in its fundamental dolorousness as arterio sclerosis. What gives it its high quality is the richness of its detail—the prodigious gorgeousness of its imagery, the dramatic effectiveness of its shifting scenes, the whole glow and gusto of it. Here, at all events, it is medieval. Here Cabell evokes an atmosphere that is the very essence of charm. Nothing could be more delightfully done than some of the episodes—that of Jurgen's meeting with Guenevere in the Hall of

Judgment, that of his dialogue with old King Gogyrvan Gavr, that of his adventure with the Hamadryad, that of the ceremony of the Breaking of the Veil, that of his invasion of the bed-chamber of Helen of Troy. The man who could imagine such scenes is a first-rate artist, and in the manner of their execution he proves the fact again. Time and again they seem to be dissolving, shaking a bit, going to pieces—but always he carries them off. And always neatly, delicately, with an air. The humor of them has its perils; to Puritans it must often seem shocking; it might easily become gross. But here it is no more gross than a rose-window. . . . Toward the end, alack, the thing falls down. The transition from heathen Olympuses and Arcadies to the Christian Heaven and Hell works an inevitable debasement of the comedy. The satire here ceases to be light-fingered and becomes heavy-handed: "the religion of Hell is patriotism, and the government is an enlightened democracy." It is almost like making fun of a man with inflammatory rheumatism. Perhaps the essential thing is that the book is a trifle too long. By the time one comes to Calvinism, democracy and the moral order of the world one has begun to feel surfeited. But where is there a work of art without a blemish? Even Beethoven occasionally misses fire. This "Jürgen," for all such ifs and buts, is a very fine thing. It is a great pity that it was not written in French. Done in English, and printed in These States, it somehow suggests Brahms scoring his Fourth Symphony for a jazz band and giving it at an annual convention of the Knights of Pythias.

## II

LOUIS WILKINSON's "Brute Gods" (*Knopf*) is another work that sheds an exotic, somewhat spicy fragrance upon the desert air. So far as I can make out there is not a word in it to offer toothhold to the Comstocks and other such smut-snufflers, but never-

theless it is intrinsically a very immoral composition, and so the news will probably soon filter in that it has been barred from the shelves of the Chicago Public Library and preached against by some Methodist dervish in Wilkes-Barré, Pa. For from end to end it treats the cuckoldry of a respectable Englishman as a laughing matter, as Cabell treats the cuckoldry of King Arthur in "Jürgen." Worse, it offers throughout a sniffish and often extremely sardonic view of the grand passion of love, depicting it as a puerile sort of nonsense, and even as a mild insanity. One could not imagine the Hon. Josephus Daniels permitting such a book to be read by the sailors of the Grand Fleet. But to readers less diligently supervised it offers entertainment of a very pleasing variety, with many a profound, diaphragmatical laugh. I have enjoyed it, in fact, even more than I enjoyed Wilkinson's two earlier novels, "The Buffoon" and "A Chaste Man." It is a *scherzo* on a large scale—ingenious, rapid in action, original in manner of approach and infinitely amusing. The principal character, I suppose, is Alec Glaive; such plot as there is revolves around his disconcerting initiation into the secret diplomacy of love at the tender age of nineteen. But the real star of the comedy is his father, Sydney Starr Glaive, estate-agent to the Marquis of Yetminster—an extraordinarily grotesque and Rabelaisian figure, a superb numskull. Wilkinson glows whenever he turns to the elder Glaive. One sees plainly that he delights in the fellow. He spits on his hands and gives a whoop, so to speak, before every re-introduction of him. That one character sketch would be enough to make the story worth reading. But it also shows merit in other respects. The minor personages are carefully done; the dialogue is life-like; the action is unhackneyed; there is a constant play of diverting ideas. Altogether, the book offers plenty of proof that Wilkinson is not standing still.

That is, as artist. But is he making readers? Does he acquire a following? I often wonder. Other in years much less about him than about a dozen other young Englishmen who bring their goods to this market—and yet he stands head and shoulders above most of them. I daresay the favorite in the department-stores at the moment is Coningsby Dawson. Dawson is a wholesaler of mush, a lyrical sentimental. That is the way to fetch them.

## III

"BERTRAM COPE'S YEAR," by Henry B. Fuller, a veteran novelist (*Seymour*), and "Iron City," by M. H. Hedges, a neophyte (*Boni-Liveright*), are both concerned with the souls of young college professors. Otherwise, however, they are very much unlike, for Mr. Hedges views the troubles of his young Prof. John Cosmus quite seriously and even lugubriously, whereas Mr. Fuller sees in those of his young Prof. Bertram Cope only a source of innocent merriment, of innocent merriment. As for me, I prefer the Fullerian *Anschauung* and the Fullerian book; it is, at all events, more agreeable. Prof. Cope's difficulties arise from the fact that Mrs. Medora Phillips, widow of the late art-dealer and connoisseur, takes him under her wing and tries to make him feel at home in college-town society. The result is a triple entanglement. First Amy Leffingwell falls in love with him, then he is beset by a girl named Hortense, and finally he is seen succumbing to the ghastly assiduity of one Carolyn. All these maids are protégées of Mrs. Phillips, and so poor Cope has a deuce of a time eluding them; when they have at him, so to speak, he is strapped to the board of their patroness' hospitality. He himself is somewhat heavily patronized by Basil Randolph, a middle-aged bachelor who plays at stock-brokerage by day and is an arbiter of intellectual society in his hours of leisure. Both Randolph and Mrs.

Phillips are a good deal disappointed by the young professor. They try their best to further his interests in academic circles, but in the end he not only fails to profit by their benign machinations, but even forgets to be grateful. Well, boys will be boys! The gas of youth is still in him. It is simply beyond him to imagine that he needs help. . . . A very fair piece of writing, as novels go. A bit sly and *pizzicato*; even a bit distinguished. If you know the later novels of E. F. Benson, you know the tone of it. Can this be the Fuller who wrote "The Cliff-Dwellers" and "With the Procession," *circa* 1893, and so launched realism in America? The same! What remains of him is a pleasant style, an adept technique, the manner of a gentleman. Well, let us not repine. Wasn't it the aforesaid E. F. Benson who, long years ago, wrote "Dodo?" Age slackens us and mellows us. Meanwhile, it is surely something to be an American novelist, and yet write like a gentleman.

The novice, Hedges, is probably still very young—even younger than the Benson of "Dodo." The hot, idiotic indignations of youth leap from every page of "Iron City." It is riotously against something, but just what that something may be I can't make out very clearly. Probably the Interests—or the System. Young Prof. Cosmus, employed to teach sociology to undergraduates at Crandon Hill College, trains with the Bolsheviks of the faculty, consorts with labor leaders, has a hand in a strike, and finally gets himself cashiered. Meanwhile he falls in love with Margaret Morton, the beautiful and voluptuous daughter of Carl Morton, foreman of the smithy gang in the R. Sill & Co. engine works, whose president, R. Sill, Sr., pulls sinister wires behind the college scenes, and is probably the villain of the tale. And if not R. Sill, Sr., then R. Sill, Jr. This R. Sill, Jr., is a wild fellow, driving a fast roadster, venturing into aeroplaneing, and keeping an evil eye upon the

town girls. Finally, moved by a demoniacal impulse, he destroys the virtue of Margaret. This nefarious enterprise is achieved (with Margaret's misguided consent) on the high altar of a church, the congregation being happily absent on account of the hour, it being after midnight. In the fact I detect the secret of the favorable notice that the book is getting from the lady reviewers of the newspapers. Give them some thumping sexual novelty, and be piously sad about it, and they infallibly cry up the resultant work as "strong," "original" and "full of power." . . . In "Iron City" there is no more actual "power" than you will discover in a paragraph of balderdash by Dr. Frank Crane. It is a creaking, sophomoric and extraordinarily absurd piece of writing—obscure in aim, crude in characterization and childish in incident—in brief, a sort of post-adolescent "Young Visiters." It shows no merit whatever, and, what is more, no promise.

Another indignant and windy tale is "The Strongest," by Georges Clemenceau (*Doubleday-Page*), a belated translation of "Les Plus Forts," first published in 1898. Here again the eloquence is all aimed at the Interests; Henri de Puymaufray, the hero, is a sort of French Prof. Cosmus. The thing is too pathetically bad to deserve a slating. Clemenceau is not an artist, but a mob-master, and it may be said for him, at the least, that he probably writes fiction quite as well as the Hon. William Jenhings Bryan would do it, or the Right Hon. David Lloyd-George. It is curious to compare the two books, and to differentiate the French point of view from the American. In the American book the male participant in the carnality around which the action swings is the villain; in the French he is the hero. . . . French and American notions collide in "A Woman's Man," by Marjorie Patterson (*Doran*), for the hero is a Frenchman and the author is an American. Perhaps the miscegena-

tion is responsible for the general dullness of the story. Miss Patterson wrote a capital novel in "Fortunata" and a tale full of charm and color in "The Dust of the Road," but in "A Woman's Man" she somehow manages to be tedious and incredible. Her task is to get into the mind of a French ladies' man—to set forth the mental contents and processes of a Gaul who is crippled in his young manhood by a preposterous affair with a woman much his senior, and then, after a hiatus of lawful and more or less happy marriage, succumbs in middle life to the shoddy charms of a girl much his junior. Neither adventure takes on anything properly describable as *vraisemblance*; one always doubts that such a Frenchman would ever make such a sentimental ass of himself; the event is French but the motivation is suspiciously American. Worse, the story lacks all charm. Whole chapters, to me, at all events, are next to unreadable. If this is Miss Patterson's new manner, then let her resume her old manner forthwith. "Fortunata" was a bouncing and excellent piece of work; "The Dust of the Road," more placid, was scarcely less competently done. It would be a Christian service to battered novel-readers to forget the woes of French Lotharios, and do another story like them.

#### IV

JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER'S "The Happy End" (*Knopf*) is a collection of seven novelettes, all obviously concocted for the popular magazine traffic, and so it would be useless to subject them to a too prying laparotomy. The author dedicates the book, with disarming irony, to his grocer. Two of the stories are war tales of the standard sort; several others are frank thrillers; all are effective and all are rather hollow. What solid merit they show lies in the writing. Hergesheimer seems incapable of writing downright badly; even when his tongue is in his cheek his ear is alert for rhythms

and his hand knows how to conject a pretty phrase.

His "Linda Condon" (*Knopf*) is better goods, both in intent and in execution. The first half of it, indeed, embodies some of the best work that he has ever done; it is worthy to be set beside the last half of "Java Head". In the thing begins to wobble a bit after that the fault is not in the writing but in the fundamental characterization. What happens to Linda Condon is that she ceases to be the brilliantly real creature that she was as a child, endlessly trooping from hotel to hotel with her déclassée mother, and becomes a mere animated theory, not always quite plausible. And what happens to the two men who love her, and between whom she oscillates like a piece of steel between two magnets, is that they are sometimes emptied of all reality in order to make them fit into the play of ideas. One never quite believes in her husband, Arnaud Hallet. The man is altogether too static and inert; he is no more changed by twenty-five years of life with Linda than if he had been embalmed and filed away in a safe deposit vault; she herself loses vividness by her palpable failure to produce any intelligible reaction in him. Nor is there much more of the real in Dodge Pleydon, the other man. Pleydon, of course, escapes the more commonplace sort of unreality. He is not the stuffed genius of everyday fiction. But though he is thus not actively a marionette, he is passively a shadow. One gets the physical effect of seeing him always in a dim light. He is, in the last analysis, almost disembodied—a mere function of Linda's boreal personality.

Hergesheimer is far more successful with the lesser folks of the fable, particularly Linda's grotesque mother and her amiable stepfather, Mr. Moses Feldt. The mother, in fact, is a capital sketch, alive and full of color. Nothing could be more effective than the little lights that are flashed upon her. I have called her one of the

lesser folk of the fable. As a matter of fact, she is the essential protagonist, for all that is set before us proceeds inevitably out of the nomadic, dubious life that she leads while Linda is still a child, and out of the philosophy that she deduces from her monotonous and unsavory experiences. If Linda is anything, she is a woman paralyzed by a theory—and the theory is not hers at all, but her mother's. Her quest for happiness is a quest made hopeless by the weight of that theory; one sees her forever approaching gingerly the sentiment that would save her, and as often drawing back. What ails the book is her too relentless fidelity to it, and to the attitude of mind growing out of it. Only once does she seem on the verge of throwing off its coils, and even then she falters at the last moment, and is lost. . . . As I say, a novel with a defect. The inexorable logic of "Java Head" is not in it. Perhaps that logic was in the author's mind as he wrote, but he has not got it into his book. What he has got is the painstaking and unfailingly engrossing manner of a very adept craftsman. There are American novelists who are far more serious and profound than Hergesheimer. There are novelists who are, in the things that concern them, more interesting. But there is none who carries the sheer art of writing nearer perfection. There is none who shows a finer and more stimulating workmanship.

## V

WHY Louis Couperus' "Ecstasy" (*Dodd-Mead*) should have been laboriously clawed from Dutch into English is more than I can make out. Haven't we enough bad novels of our own? And if the supply ever falls off aren't there a hundred Englishmen standing ready to give aid? "Ecstasy" belongs to the puerile psychological fiction of the nineties—the fiction of tortured soul states, defecitively comprehended. Rewritten to

day, it would make a document for the ABC class in Freudism. All the characters, without a single exception, suffers from complexes of one sort or another. Young Jules Van Attemas, aged fourteen, is tortured by adolescent repressions, and dreams horribly with his eyes wide open. His mother, Amélie Van Attemas, has hallucinations. "Everything," she says, "runs through my brain. It is a terrible feeling!" His aunt, the widowed Cecile Van Even, yearns for love and is yet afraid of it. And Cecile's admirer, Mr. Taco H. Quaerts, struggles with an internal poltergeist that makes him cut up with chambermaids, despite his honest desire to be worthy of Cecile's affection. Altogether it is a fearful kettle of fish.

One simply cannot read the story without snickering, and yet the author, Couperus, is a man of the first eminence in Holland; in fact, he is almost the whole modern literature of Holland. Undoubtedly he has written better stuff. Why isn't it done into English instead of this hollow prentice work?

## VI

IN the remaining fiction I can find little of interest. Ellen Glasgow's "The Builders" (*Doubleday*) has merits in detail, but is generally dull and empty: a commonplace sentimentalization of the late war-fever. "The Substitute Millionaire," by Hulbert Footner (*Doran*); "Simon," by J. Storr Clouston (*Doran*); "The Honorable Gentleman," by Achmed Abdulla (*Putnam*); "The Harbor Road," by Sara Ware Bassett (*Penn*); "The Sinister Revel," by Lillian Barrett (*Knopf*); "A Servant of Reality," by Phyllis Bottome (*Century*); "The Lamp in the Desert," by Ethel M. Dell (*Putnam*); "The Doings of Raffles Haw," by Conan Doyle (*Doran*); "Bulldog Carney," by W. A. Fraser (*Doran*); "John Dene of Toronto," by Herbert Jenkins (*Doran*);

"The Green Pea Pirates," by Peter B.illnes (*Doubleday*); "Sisters," by Katharine Norris (*Doubleday*); "The League of the Scarlet Pimpernel," by Baroness Orczy (*Doran*); "Open Sesame," by Mrs Baillie Reynolds (*Doran*); "The Red Mark," by W. E. Russell (*Knopf*); "Love Lett a Last," by S. G. Tallentyre (*Doran*); "Taking the Count," by Charles E. Van Loan (*Doran*), and "The Man Who Fell Through the Earth," by Carolyn Wells (*Doran*), are all popular pieces of small pretensions, and so need not detain us. "The Exploits of Bilge and Ma," by Peter Clark MacFarlane (*Little-Brown*); "At a Dollar a Year," by Robert L. Raymond (*Jones*); "Believe Me You!" by Nina Wilcox Putnam (*Doran*); "Mufti," by Cyril McNeile (*Doran*); and "Captain Zillner," by R. J. Kreutz (*Doran*), have to do with the war and its aftermath, and all seem to me to be hard reading.

There is little that was worth preserving in "Fantastics and Other Fancies," by Lafcadio Hearn (*Houghton*) a collection of sketches written for New Orleans newspapers between 1880 and 1887. Collectors of Hearniana, of course, will want the book, if only for the interesting preface by Charles Woodward Hutson, but in the sketches themselves there are few hints of the Hearn of "Two Years in the French West Indies" and thereafter. Nor is there anything of much interest in "Waifs and Strays," a reprint of twelve early stories by the late O. Henry, with a number of florid tributes to the author by various critics, including George Jean Nathan. Just when Nathan wrote his piece I don't know, but probably it was a good while ago. In the interval his judgments in beautiful letters have been much improved, not only by increasing age but also by association with talented critics. I doubt that, employed to compose such a critique today, he would lavish the adjective "great" upon the author of "Waifs and Strays."

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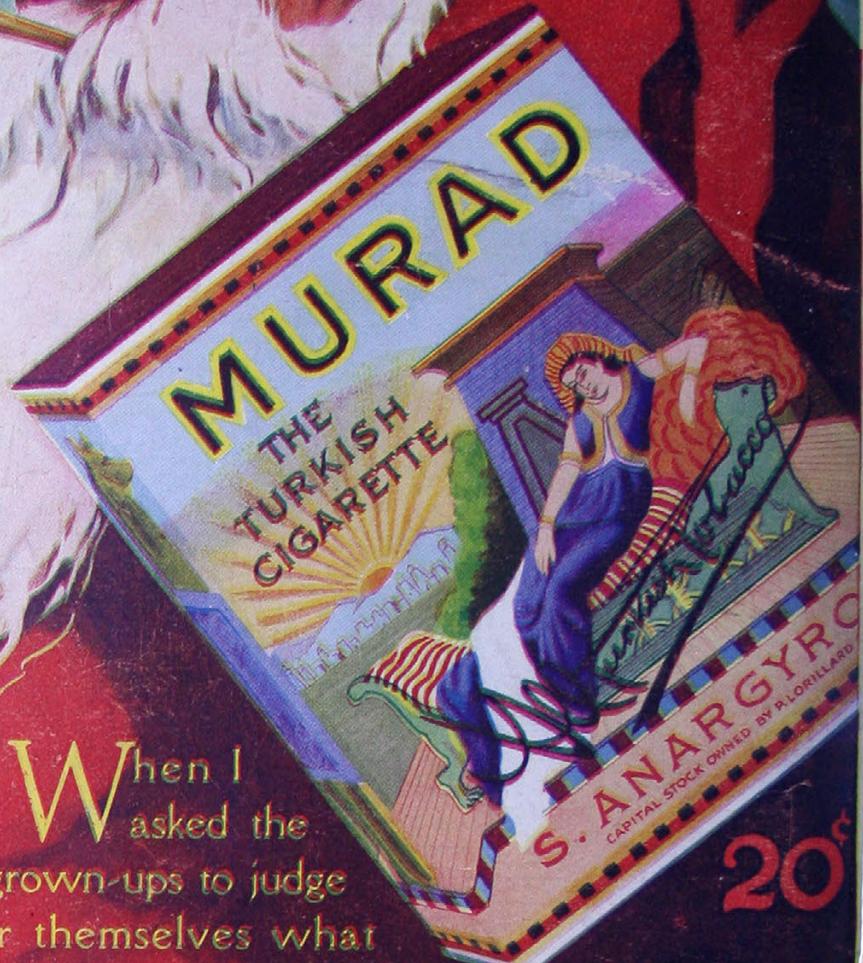
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